

p-ISSN : 2708-2091 | e-ISSN : 2708-3586

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gsr  
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gsr/.2024(IX)  
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gsr.2024(IX.II)



# GSR



**GLOBAL SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW**  
HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

**VOL. IX, ISSUE II, SPRING (JUNE-2024)**



Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal  
www.gsrjournal.com  
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Article title

Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District

Global Sociological Review

p-ISSN: 2708-2091 e-ISSN: 2708-3586

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gsr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gsr.2024(IX)

Issue: II (Spring-June 2024)

DOI(issue): 10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II)

Home Page

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Volume: IX (2024)

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Issue: II-Spring (June-2024)

<https://www.gsrjournal.com/Current-issues/9/2/2024>

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Abstract

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**Keywords:** Leadership Style, Organizational Engagement, Punjab Police, Bahawalpur

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Pages: 12-23

DOI:10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2024\(IX-II\).02](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02)

Article link: <http://www.gsrjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

Full-text Link: <https://gsrjournal.com/fulltext/>

Pdf link: <https://www.gsrjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvIolA2.pdf>

Citing Article

02	<b>Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District</b>						
	<b>Author</b>	Hafiz Ghulam Muhtada Zil-e-Huma Rafique Ghulam Mustafa		<b>DOI</b>	10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).02		
<b>Pages</b>	12-23	<b>Year</b>	2024	<b>Volume</b>	IX	<b>Issue</b>	II
Referencing & Citing Styles	<b>APA</b>	Muhtada, H. G., Rafique, Z.-e.-H., & Mustafa, G. (2024). Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District. <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , IX(II), 12-23. <a href="https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02">https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02</a>					
	<b>CHICAGO</b>	Muhtada, Hafiz Ghulam, Zil-e-Huma Rafique, and Ghulam Mustafa. 2024. "Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District." <i>Global Sociological Review</i> IX (II):12-23. doi: 10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02.					
	<b>HARVARD</b>	MUHTADA, H. G., RAFIQUE, Z.-E.-H. & MUSTAFA, G. 2024. Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District. <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , IX, 12-23.					
	<b>MHRA</b>	Muhtada, Hafiz Ghulam, Zil-e-Huma Rafique, and Ghulam Mustafa. 2024. 'Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District', <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , IX: 12-23.					
	<b>MLA</b>	Muhtada, Hafiz Ghulam, Zil-e-Huma Rafique, and Ghulam Mustafa. "Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District." <i>Global Sociological Review</i> IX.II (2024): 12-23. Print.					
	<b>OXFORD</b>	Muhtada, Hafiz Ghulam, Rafique, Zil-e-Huma, and Mustafa, Ghulam (2024), 'Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District', <i>Global Sociological Review</i> , IX (II), 12-23.					
	<b>TURABIAN</b>	Muhtada, Hafiz Ghulam, Zil-e-Huma Rafique, and Ghulam Mustafa. "Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District." <i>Global Sociological Review</i> IX, no. II (2024): 12-23. <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02">https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2024(IX-II).02</a> .					



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## Title

### Punjab Police: Leadership Styles and Burnout in Bahawalpur District

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## Abstract

*The present study investigates how leadership styles can lead to burnout and organizational engagement via sample of 100 officers from the executive arm of the Punjab Police Department. A random sampling method was used based on primary sources. The required information was obtained from Bahawalpur District police. Data analysis for this research is done using correlation and multiple linear regression, while Cronbach's alpha is used to evaluate the survey instrument's reliability. Additionally, the regression results show that there is no considerable and instantaneous effect of transformational leadership on job burnout. In addition, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles significantly lead to job burnout. In the Punjab Police Agency, its leadership applies transactional and laissez-faire approaches which results rise in turnover levels year after year within the organization. Given the results, senior management should therefore consider and implement guidelines that encourage revolutionary approaches towards managing people in leadership to minimize burnout.*

#### Keywords:

[Leadership Style](#),  
[Organizational Engagement](#),  
[Punjab Police](#),  
[Bahawalpur](#)

#### Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Burnout Syndrome](#)
- [Organization Commitment](#)
- [Research Methodology](#)
- [Correlation Study](#)
- [Analysis](#)
- [Constraints](#)
- [Future Research Ideas](#)
- [References](#)

## Introduction

For organization and order, societies set up law enforcement agencies with their structures, practices, and regulations for the sake of undertaking ordinary tasks (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Their efficiency and effectiveness are often directed toward the public goal (Newton, 2016). Mostly they depend on how well these organizations are led. Nevertheless, some experts believe that Law enforcement agencies (LEAs)

often encounter delays in implementing efficient leadership methods due to a preexisting culture and structure that is harder to change. Efficient and effective leaders in such agencies set a clear outline of their organizations' goals as well as those of the communities they serve (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Effective productivity in law enforcement agencies, including the police department, requires a good leader who can lead competently and efficiently



(Newton, 2016). To influence followers' attitudes successfully, a leader should consider their needs along with the organization's financial possibilities. In addition, organizational executives who exert a supportive and participative style of leadership are more successful and profitable. Numerous leadership philosophies exist, including situational leadership, transactional leadership, proactive and prescriptive leadership, transformational leadership, laissez-faire/free-rein/non-leadership; participative leadership, and so forth. The present-day issues that law enforcement institutions must deal with are leadership issues (Schafer, 2010). Considering the risks and emergency control involved, as well as the demand for leaders of high moral standing to keep or regain public confidence, Pakistan's most daring challenge today lies with its top law enforcement executives.

Numerous academics have said that working as a police officer is the most stressful job. This stressful occupation is affected by shift work, which increases the potential for work-related accidents or errors (Jacobsen, 1979). Also, citizen dissatisfaction with patrol division, inequities and complexities of court, and ghetto conditions have given the police "unbelievably" elevated levels of pressure (Jacobsen, 1979). The monotony, rigid rules and regulations, and bureaucratic and military structure have all contributed to the occupational stress (Jermier et al., 1989). In addition to pressure from the job, police can also face grave dangers either from the criminal public or in their work environment (Jermier et al., 1989). All the previously mentioned factors can lead the police officer to burnout (Burke, 1993), which is characterized by "emotional exhaustion, dehumanization, and diminished feelings of accomplishment" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This syndrome can even extend itself to a police officer's family life (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). According to Burke (1993), indulging in extended workdays and inadequate supervision in the office can cause the officer's mind to deal with traumatic situations without rest. (Pines, 1982) also related a lack of feedback to emotional exhaustion and a decrease in self-perception (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). In the

United States, it is thought that leaders who are autocratic/authoritarian, inconsiderate of others, and task-focused create higher strain levels for subordinates (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). This is particularly true for police officers (Stinchcomb, 2004).

Maintaining and sustaining peace and security is the mandate of LEO (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Because this organization's business is about leading an LEO successfully, effective leadership in this industry should be efficient and of the best. The existing leadership is concentrated more on the traditional hierarchical system which is seriously impeding teamwork because senior executives run their institutions at their discretion and directive, act on their instructions, and abhor standard operating procedures (SOPs), (Newton, 2016). The middle management echelon consists of "SHO, DSP, DPO are to subordinate to the senior executives and are suffering from the absence of inspirational leadership". Officers who show supportive and collaborative leadership styles are more productive and efficient than those who do not do so (Schafer, 2010). LEAs lack confidence in their ability to provide support and involvement because appointment and promotion procedures are outdated, and seniority and ranks are given greater weight in these decisions than leadership talents (Newton, 2016). As a result, subordinates' potential is not maximized as needed (C. Anderson & Brown, 2010).

The police are always faced with challenges when it comes to fighting crime, terrorism, and other types of offenses due to limited resources. This leads to issues such as role ambiguity, different leadership styles, the fast-paced nature of media, heavy workloads, and constant scrutiny from the public and courts.

Many factors can lead to burnout among police personnel in the Bahawalpur division, but this study specifically looks at burnout caused by leadership styles. Burnout can lead to poor employee health, decreased morale, and a higher chance of workers leaving their jobs early.

## Literature Review

Leadership may seem like a difficult concept, but it

plays a crucial role in research projects relating to management and supervision. According to (Sternberg, 2007), creativity, intellect, and wisdom are three key elements of leadership. He also said that leadership involves qualities and skills that can be learned and developed over time. Leaders can improve by staying open to learning from their followers (Sternberg, 2007). "In his reviews from 1948 and 1974, (Stogdill & Coons, 1957) determined that the essential traits of successful leaders are sociability, intelligence, awareness, insight, responsibility, initiative, tenacity, and self-assurance. The results of the second review demonstrated a strong sense of accountability and a dedication to finishing duties between 1948 and 1974".

Researchers have found various traits that are believed to be essential for effective leadership. (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991) highlighted qualities such as motivation, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, and cognitive ability. On the other hand, (Lord et al., 1986) found intelligence, masculinity, and dominance as the most common characteristics among leaders. However, (Howell et al., 1990) did not find specific traits that are linked to a leader's efficacy and success. In a literature review by (Pierce & Newstrom, 1999) spanning from the 1950s to the early 1990s, it was concluded that leaders are defined by their actions rather than simply their innate qualities.

Based on research, two types of behaviors were identified as affecting those they lead: (1) setting up guidelines and (2) displaying empathy. (Li, 2014) initially found two leadership behaviors, one focusing on relationships and the other on tasks, to effectively lead and influence outcomes. Northouse's (2007) finding suggests that there is not a single perfect leadership style, as it varies depending on the situation. (House & Mitchell, 1975) highlight that a leader's key attributes lie in their capacity to support their team members in overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals.

Research by (Yasir et al., 2016) suggests that a leader's effectiveness plays a key role in motivating employees and guiding them toward achieving their aims. Additionally, Weber (1947) defines "charisma"

as a unique quality that enables individuals to exert influence over others. (House & Mitchell, 1975) found three important characteristics of charismatic leaders through their analysis of Weber's (1947) research from different perspectives. The first part highlighted personal qualities such as self-assurance and a firm belief in one's convictions, while the second part examined how charismatic leaders affect their followers. According to (E. W. Anderson, 1998), for a leader to be effective, managers need to have leadership qualities and understand management. (Burke, 1993) suggested that managers could enhance their leadership abilities by learning how to influence others, noting that simply having authority does not necessarily make a good leader. Several scholars have recognized that there is no clear line between leadership and management, but they also agree that transactional management and transformational leadership have interconnected effects on each other (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

(Bass & Avolio, 1994) presented the "Full Range of Leadership (FRL)" model to better explain the leadership process, drawing from their studies on transactional and transformational leadership. This model emphasizes the various leadership behaviors that individuals can employ to influence their followers.

### **Burnout Syndrome**

Excessive and protracted stress can cause burnout, a condition that can result in physical, mental, and emotional tiredness. It is typically triggered by feeling overwhelmed with difficult tasks that remain unfinished for assorted reasons or by having unrealistic expectations for rewards upon completing these tasks. According to researchers, burnout is the result of ongoing work-related stress brought on by an imbalance between an individual's needs and the resources available to fulfill those demands. (Jackson, 2016) defined it as such, while (Harrison, 1983) characterized it as a lack of motivation and drive to excel in one's endeavors. "Burnout" is defined as a gradual loss of satisfaction (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980). This can lead to emotional, mental, and physical fatigue, making one susceptible to outbursts

and hindering one's ability to perform effectively at work. The individual may also lose interest in tasks they once enjoyed, experiencing a decrease in productivity due to feelings of overwork and overwhelm."

Research from the mid-20th century to the mid-1990s found that a significant percentage of workers felt that their direct supervisor was a major source of stress or burnout at work. Stress can diminish a person's ability to handle work responsibilities, as shown in a study on police culture by (Slate et al., 2007). (S. B. Campbell et al., 1996) the study explored different stress levels among British police officers. According to some experts, stress can lead to General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), which prepares the body to build immunity to stress. If stress exceeds the body's ability, it can result in fatigue and weaken the body's ability to resist harmful effects. (Etzion, 1987) highlighted that burnout is a form of psychological deterioration caused by sustained job-related stress. (Brill, 1984) also suggested that burnout can occur due to continuous stress during the adaptation phase at work.

In his study on American policing, Toch (2002) found that burnout often occurs because of police stress, resulting in reduced performance, cynicism, and distrust. (Maslach, 1982) also said that police officers experiencing burnout tend to withdraw from family matters, display anger, experience unhappy marriages, and devote more time away from their loved ones.

### **Organization Commitment**

When a person shows behaviors that show their loyalty and emotional attachment to the company, it is known as their organizational commitment. This means they are more likely to stay with the company out of choice rather than obligation (Meyer et al., 1993). The researchers examined how organizational commitment affects burnout syndrome from different perspectives. While some studies discovered that burnout lowers organizational commitment, others found that it increases it.

Several studies (Cropanzano et al., 2007) have investigated how burnout is related to factors such as

interpersonal conflicts and organizational fairness. (Cropanzano et al., 2007) define organizational justice as how employees view their treatment within the organization and whether it meets ethical standards. Interpersonal conflicts were found to be linked with burnout in a study (Mercado-Salgado & Gil-Monte, 2010). They also saw a negative relationship between burnout syndrome and two aspects of organizational commitment: normative and emotional commitments. (Salehi & Gholtash, 2011) reported comparable results in 2011, noting a negative association between job burnout and organizational commitment. A study (Karakus et al., 2014) focused on Turkish educational supervisors overseeing higher education institutions. They concluded that higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived justice can decrease burnout in organizational settings.

### **The Impact of Organizational Commitment, Burnout, and Leadership Styles**

A leadership style can either positively or negatively affect an individual's level of burnout. Poor leadership can lead to role ambiguity and emotional strain. It can create negativity by undervaluing or rewarding employees based on their adherence to rules, empowering or disempowering them from decision-making, and promoting or hindering teamwork. Effective leadership plays a crucial role in preventing or alleviating burnout, as noted by (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003). Even though some leadership styles may be more supportive, employees may still experience feelings of burnout. According to (Harris & Kacmar, 2006) there is a unique relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and stress. They found that workers with moderate LMX relationships experience less stress compared to those with either high-quality or low-quality relationships. Additionally, (Eid et al., 2008) suggest that burnout symptoms could be linked to a passive or avoidant leadership style, especially for individuals with lower hardiness scores.

### **Research Methodology**

The current study takes a survey-based research approach, focusing on non-experimental, cross-

sectional, and quantitative methods. The main aim is to find and measure the relationship between different variables. Burnout is seen as the outcome being studied, while leadership styles are viewed as influencing factors, and organizational commitment is looked at as a moderating element. The population consists of 100 field officers randomly selected from the Bahawalpur District within the Punjab Police Executive Branch, who are asked to complete questionnaires providing the required data. During the Bahawalpur police lineup, participants were approached to collect data for a survey. They were given clear instructions on how to respond to the questions, and we were able to easily reach out to them and distribute the survey questionnaires. Any inquiries they had were promptly addressed. The data collection took place between October 2023 and April 2024. The sample excluded officers under the age of 25, with a minimum of six years of experience needed to join the police department. Furthermore, the survey did not include high-ranking officers such as SP, SSP, DIG, and IGP, both male and female.

### Metrics/Technology

**Leadership styles:** (Avolio et al., 1999) enhanced the MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) to create the MLQ form 5X, originally developed by Bass Bernard (1985). The MLQ-5X consisted of 36 questions using a scale with response options varying from 'not at all = 0, once in a while = 1, occasionally = 2, fairly often = 3, frequently if not always = 4.' Among these questions, 20 focused on transformational leadership, 12 on transactional leadership, and 4 on laissez-faire leadership.

**Burnout** is a concept that was explored by Maslach and Jackson in 1981, leading to the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to show the characteristics of burnout in the field of human services. The MBI serves as a tool to measure burnout by using a Likert scale with fourteen items ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (once per year). Sample questions from the MBI include "I feel used up at the end of the workday" and "I feel emotionally drained from my work."

### Institutional Commitment

The scale of 15 questions used in this study to measure organizational commitment was created by (Mowday et al., 1979) and later improved by (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

### Methods of Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, (Hayes, 2012) used a process that relies on the self-reports of the participants. It is important to trust that the information provided by the participants is genuine and reliable. They see and evaluate the behavior of their organization's leader, report their observations accurately, and respond honestly to the questionnaires.

### Findings and Evaluations

#### Analyzing Statistics

During the investigation, the highest percentage of responses came from Investigation Officers (I.O.s), accounting for 41.8% of the total. The data was provided by SI, ASI, and HC, with respective ratios of 19.4%, 21.4%, and 36.7%. The age distribution of the respondents was as follows: 25% were over 40 years old, while 75.5% fell in the 22–44 age range. The sample consisted of 14.2% females and 85.8% males. All respondents belonged to the executive branch, with 55.1% having at least an intermediate level of qualification. In terms of length of employment, 44.9% reported working for five to ten years.

#### Correlation Study

The study revealed that burnout and organizational commitment are negatively correlated with transformational leadership (coefficients of  $-0.110$  and  $-0.071$ , respectively). Similarly, there is a negative correlation between transactional leadership and burnout, as well as organizational commitment (coefficients of  $-0.163$  and  $-0.193$ , respectively). On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership showed a positive correlation with organizational commitment and fatigue (coefficients of  $0.085$  and  $0.121$ , respectively).



**Table 1**

Statics for Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5
Transformational Leadership	(.709)				
Transactional Leadership	.723	(.524)			
Laissez-faire Leadership	.072	.323	(.742)		
Burnout	-.110	-.163	.085	(.792)	
Organizational Commitment	-.067	-.197	-.117	.275	(.795)

Note: The values in parenthesis are the alpha for the correlation.

**Evaluation of Regression**

Outcome variable = Burnout

Burnout because of organizational Commitment and transformational leadership.

**Table 2**

Model Summary

R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.3870	.1350	.1169	4.9018	3.0100	93.9999	.0035

**Table 3**

Model

	Coefficient	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-1.4151	1.1466	-1.2345	.2202	-3.6916	.8610
Transformational Leadership	.8425	.4030	2.0897	.0395	.0418	1.6430
Organizational Commitment	1.9845	.7348	2.7016	.0085	.5265	3.4428
int_1	-.6145	.2595	-2.3696	.0198	-1.1297	-.0995

int\_1: Transformational Leadership \* Organizational Commitment

**Table 4**

Square of R increases in the correlation due to interactions

	R <sup>2</sup> - Changes	F	df1	df2	P
TRFL * OC	.0519	5.6144	1.0009	93.9999	.0198

**Table 5**

Independent variable's conditional influence on the dependent variable at moderator values

OC	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
1.3444	.0230	1.025	.2240	.8235	-.1805	.2260
1.3999	-.0180	.0958	-.1899	.8505	-.2082	.1720
1.9550	-.3525	.1440	-2.4580	.0160	-.6380	-.0655

The findings of the first hypothesis are displayed in Tables 3–6. According to hypothesis 1, there was a moderating effect of organizational Commitment on

the link between the independent and dependent variables. Based on transformational leadership, the results showed that the interaction term was

significant in predicting burnout ( $\beta = -.6145, p < .05$ ). So, the first hypothesis is confirmed. R square was found to be 0.1350 in Table 2. It suggests that a moderate part of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by independent variables. Table 4 reports the R square change resulting from

moderation, which was statistically significant (R2 change = .0519,  $p < .05$ ).

The effect of organizational commitment on burnout because of transactional leadership.

Outcome variable = Burnout

**Table 6**

*Model Summary*

R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
0.3760	.1415	.1160	5.1680	1.0009	93.9999	.0025

**Table 7**

*Model*

	Coefficient	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-.9092	.9160	-.9924	.3235	-2.7279	.90999
Transactional Leadership	.7899	.3731	2.11885	.0365	.0498	1.5303
Organizational Commitment	1.5905	.5565	2.8587	.0055	.4855	2.7000
int_1	-.5650	.22999	-2.4565	.0160	-1.0201	-.1085

*int\_1: Transactional Leadership \* Organizational Commitment*

**Table 8**

*Square of R increases in the correlation due to interactions*

	R <sup>2</sup> - Changes	F	df1	df2	P
TRSCLE * OC	.0550	6.0355	1.0009	93.9999	.0160

**Table 9**

*Effect of X on Y conditional on the values of the moderator(s)*

OC	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
1.3444	.0364	.1042	.3515	.7265	-.1700	.2430
1.3999	-.0015	.0965	-.0120	.9903	-.1928	.1905
1.9550	-.3085	.1220	-2.5306	.0132	-.5505	.0667

The outcomes are displayed in Tables 7–10. According to Hypothesis 2, the association between transactional leadership and burnout was mediated by organizational Commitment. According to the findings, there was a significant correlation between transactional leadership and burnout ( $\beta = -.5650, p < .05$ ) in the interaction term. So, hypothesis number two is confirmed. The R square in Table 6 became

1415. It shows that the influence of independent factors explains a moderate part of the variance in the dependent variable. Table 8 reports the R square change because of moderating, which was significant (R2 change = .0550,  $p < .05$ ).

Effect of Organizational Commitment on Burnout with Laissez-faire (Lf) Leadership:

Outcome variable = Burnout

**Table 10**

Model Summary

R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.3560	.1263	.1180	4.5373	1.0009	93.9999	.0050

**Table 11**

Model

	Coefficient	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-.1118	.4745	-.2355	.8145	-1.0528	.8295
Laissez-faire Leadership	.4877	.2065	2.3592	.0205	.0774	.8979
Organizational Commitment	.9465	.3130	3.0250	.0030	.3250	1.5676
int_1	-3.098	.1343	-2.3055	.0235	-.5765	-.0432

int\_1: Laissez-faire Leadership \* Organizational Commitment

**Table 12**

Square of R increases in the correlation due to interactions

	R <sup>2</sup> - Changes	F	df1	df2	P
int_1	.0495	5.3158	1.0009	93.9999	.0235

**Table 13**

OC	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
1.3444	.0745	.0645	1.1555	.2507	-.0535	.2021
1.3999	.0535	.0625	.8595	.3925	-.0704	.1775
1.9550	-.1150	.0891	-1.2911	.1999	-.2918	.0620

The results for hypothesis 3 can be seen in Tables 11–14. Hypothesis 3 suggested that the relationship between burnout and laissez-faire leadership was influenced by organizational commitment. The data revealed that the impact of laissez-faire leadership on burnout was significantly affected by the interaction term ( $\beta = -.3098, p < .05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 3 has been supported. The R square value was reported as .1263, as shown in Table 10, showing that independent factors explain a moderate amount of variability in the dependent variable. Table 12 proves a significant R square change due to moderation (R2 change = .0495,  $p < .05$ ).

**Analysis**

The first findings of the correlation study support the theories. There was a clear connection between organizational Commitment and transactional

leadership. Transactional leadership focuses on using rewards or punishments to push employees to complete tasks. The Pakistan police force is dealing with issues such as long hours, challenging tasks, and strict responsibility. To get their subordinates to do the work, punishments are used more often than rewards. This type of leadership could negatively affect organizational loyalty.

In this instance, it was found that burnout and transformational leadership are negatively correlated. Transformational leadership employs various strategies to boost individuals' motivation and effectiveness. As a result, employees receive support in their roles and find themselves more inspired by this leadership style. Due to this, when feeling overwhelmed and stressed, employees are motivated to reciprocate and prevent burnout. Burnout was found to have a negative correlation with

transactional leadership, which focuses on task completion using both rewards and punishments. Employees who are properly acknowledged are motivated, able to tackle difficult tasks, and less prone to feeling stressed or burned out under pressure. There was a positive connection between burnout and laissez-faire leadership.

The goal of the recent research was to analyze the impact of three varying leadership styles on burnout while considering organizational commitment. The results showed that organizational commitment plays a significant role in moderating the relationship between transformational leadership and burnout. The study also found that organizational commitment has a similar moderating effect on the connections between transactional leadership and burnout, as well as laissez-faire leadership and burnout.

### Constraints

The primary constraint of this research is its exclusive concentration on the Bahawalpur region of Punjab due to time and budget constraints, resulting in a small sample size. One major drawback of the study is that its findings may not apply to other law enforcement agencies in Pakistan as it only includes Punjab Police officers, making generalization difficult. Additionally, while the study does include female officers in the sample, it does not specifically address burnout among them due to gender differences.

### Implications for Executives

The findings of the study show that police officers who have a transformational leadership approach feel less exhausted and more dedicated to their organization. Therefore, senior leaders need to implement policies that support the development of such leadership traits among their subordinates.

- To prevent police officers from experiencing burnout and improve their well-being, efforts should be made to enhance their overall health. A positive impact on the well-being of the force will lead to increased enthusiasm and motivation among officers, leading to improved performance and better service provision to the community that supports them.
- To increase employees' commitment to the organization and foster an intense sense of motivation, unity, and teamwork, it is important to enhance organizational Commitment.
- Having a considerable influence on the overall functioning of the police, especially on public relations, as officers are usually seen to have direct contact with the public.

Based on the results presented, it is essential to create and put into action thorough training programs for managers and supervisors to improve their behaviors and attitudes towards transformational leadership, helping the Punjab Police Department.

### Future Research Ideas

Based on the results of the latest study, we suggest that upcoming research should focus on delving deeper into different leadership styles. It would be beneficial to explore how specific characteristics of leadership styles.

Expanding the scope of the study to include more Punjab divisions and more districts for further analysis could offer valuable insights. The survey could also be extended to include top-level executives for a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, there should be an exploration of other factors aside from organizational commitment that could potentially moderate these effects.

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