

Analysis of Leadership Styles of Head Teachers at Secondary School Level in Pakistan: Locale and Gender Comparison

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Abstract

This study has been designed to analyze the leadership styles of head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan and compare them with regard to gender and locality. The head teachers and teachers working in secondary schools of Punjab province constituted the population for this study. From this population, 351 head teachers and 702 teachers from 12 districts were selected as sample by stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire having 34 items in which participants were asked to respond at 5- point Likert scale ranging from '1' indicating never to '5' indicating always in terms of how frequently the head teachers practiced each behavior. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics that include mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test. The main findings of the study revealed that majority of the head teachers were following authoritative leadership styles. Female head teachers were more democratic as compared to male head teachers. Similarly, urbane head teachers were also more democratic as compared to rural head teacher of secondary schools in Pakistan.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership style, Gender comparison, Head teacher, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Leadership plays an important role in the school effectiveness and school improvement and this importance has always been emphasized by the researchers from the field of school effectiveness and school improvement (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 1998; Hopkins, 2001).

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Dinham (2005) and Townsend (2007) found that school leadership is the single most important element which can play an important role in the success of a school. Effective and successful school leaders are able to develop and cultivate positive relationships (Crum & Sherman, 2008) and can motivate teachers to exert extra effort in their work, which in turn was related to teaching and learning (Eyal & Roth, 2011; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Murphy et al. (2007) asserts that the effective school leaders are particularly attentive to ensure that there are different mechanisms for teachers to communicate and work collectively.

Leadership style of school head plays an important role in school effectiveness and improvement. Eyal and Roth (2011, p. 256) found that "leadership styles among school principals play a significant role in teachers' motivation as well as in student achievement". Kythreotis, Pashiardis and Kyriakides (2010) found direct effects of principal's leadership style and school culture on student achievement. Holley (1995) has developed an impressive empirical evidence to suggest that the leadership style of the principal can create a climate that is conducive and supportive of the instructional emphases on the school. In conclusion, arguably it can be stated that school leadership has a significant effect on school effectiveness and school improvement (Wallace, 2002).

Since the importance of leadership for school effectiveness and school improvement is an accepted element. Different researchers have different claims regarding the leadership style that contributes effectively towards school effectiveness. Bass and Avolio (1997) provided strong support that relation-oriented leadership contributes towards school improvement more effectively because this approach builds trust, respect and a desire on the part of followers to work collectively toward the same desired future goals. Kunwar (2001) also claimed that democratic and participative leadership has significant relationships with school effectiveness and improvement. Iqbal (2005) found that the task-oriented and authoritative leadership style has significant effect on school effectiveness than the democratic and relation-oriented leadership style.

Mehmood (1995) stated that both initiating structure (task) and consideration (relation or people-oriented) are important behaviour for effective educational leaders.

These findings of different research studies reveal that there are some inconsistencies among the claims of researchers regarding the leadership style that contributes effectively towards school effectiveness and improvement.

This inconsistency may be due to some cultural differences of different countries.

One type of leadership that is effective in one situation may not contribute effectively in another situation. Another reason of this contradiction may be that different studies have been conducted in different situations on different samples. So it cannot be claimed that a specific leadership style contribute effectively in all contexts.

There seems a consensus in the literature that leadership is a key factor in school effectiveness and school improvement. Yet the bulk of research into school leadership has taken place in Western countries. The role of leadership and management in schools in developing countries is an under researched area. One of the reasons for this may be that much of the effort for educational improvement in such countries has been focused on top down, system-wide change rather than change at the grass roots level of the individual school (Simkins, Sisum & Memon, 2003).

In Pakistan, the structure of government school system, which educates the large majority of school students, is similar to that of many developing countries, especially in Asia. It is based on a "top-down" bureaucratic model with schools in the public sector controlled through centralized policy decisions. However, during the last decade, some structural and policy reforms have been designed to replace the centralized education system with a more decentralized one. Under this system some changes have been made for evolving the mechanism and transferring responsibilities from provincial level to district level (Shah, 2003). Administrative structure of education system at district level also has been changed with the establishment of some new posts. Executive District Officer (Education) is the focal person with regard to policy formulation and education development at district level. These education officers have been delegated some powers for their respective districts in respect of the schools.

In view of these reforms, educational institutions in Pakistan require effective leadership and management at school level that may be more facilitative to this educational change and contribute effectively towards school improvement.

But it is worth mentioning that the role of head teacher who is the focal person of the education system and well aware about the condition and environment of education institutions, directly supervises teachers and coordinates with local community; remains unchanged under Devolution of Power Plan. Majority of the school head teachers are still receivers of policy decisions rather than playing an active role in school development for quality improvement. Furthermore, a few studies (Mahmood, 1995; Kunwar, 2001; Iqbal, 2005) related to the problem have been conducted in the Pakistani context. Therefore, this is needful to study the leadership styles of head teacher of secondary schools in Pakistan and compare them with regard to gender and locality.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore the existing leadership styles of head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan
2. Compare the leadership styles of male and female head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan
3. Compare the leadership styles of urban and rural head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan

1.2 Research Questions of the Study

The following research questions were formulated to achieve the objectives of this study:

1. What are the existing leadership styles of secondary schools' heads in Pakistan?
2. Is there any difference between leadership styles of male and female head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan?
3. Is there any difference between leadership styles of male urban and rural head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan?

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

This study was carried out to testing two null hypotheses. These were developed to investigate the difference between leadership styles of head teachers of male/female and urban/rural secondary schools.

H₀1: There is no significant difference between leadership styles of male and female head teachers of secondary schools.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between leadership styles of head teachers of urban and rural secondary schools

2. Method and Procedure

The study was descriptive in its nature as it was based on survey. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire at five point rating scale.

2.1 Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised of 4941 head teachers of government secondary schools and 98761 teachers working in government boys and girls secondary schools in the province of Punjab (Government of Pakistan, 2011).

2.2 Selection of Sample for Survey Study

The population of the study was scattered all over the Punjab Province that comprising 36 districts. It was difficult to draw a random sample from the whole population and to collect data from such a scattered population. So one-third districts (in total) were selected from which sample of the study was drawn. Multistage stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of sample.

In the first stage, 36 districts of Punjab province were divided in to three geographical and socio-cultural zones. After that, one-third districts from each zone (12 in total) were selected through systematic random sampling technique. After the selection of 12 districts, 20% secondary schools were selected by using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The variables of gender and school location (rural/urban) were given due representation (20%) in this regard.

In the last stage, the sample of head teachers and teachers was drawn. All 351 head teachers (male and female) of selected secondary schools were included in the sample of the study.

With regards to the sample of teachers, one elementary school teacher/educator and one secondary school teacher/educator from each selected secondary school was taken as sample of the study by using simple random sampling technique. Table 1 shows the final selected sample of each category of the population.

Table 1: Selected Sample of each Category of the Population

Sr. No.	Category of population	Selected sample				
		Urban		Rural		Total
		M	F	M	F	
1.	Head Teachers of Secondary Schools	48	44	180	79	351
2.	Elementary and Secondary School Teachers	96	88	360	158	702
Total		144	132	540	237	1053

2.3 Instrumentation

This study was carried out using a survey questionnaire at five point rating scale.

For this purpose a questionnaire having three parts was developed by the researchers after reviewing the related literature. First part of the questionnaire comprised Biographical Information that includes name of the participants and their age, gender, locality (rural/urban); academic and professional qualifications; teaching and administrative experience etc. Second part consisted of 34 items on five point rating scale related to the different behaviours of head teachers that they practiced while managing their schools. They were asked to respond that how frequently they practiced their different behaviors as a head teacher. It comprised 34 items, in which they were asked to respond at 5- point Likert scale ranging from '1' indicating never to '5' indicating always in terms of how frequently they practiced each behavior.

2.4 Validation of the Instruments

Validity of the instruments was ensured through experts' opinions and pilot testing. After development of instruments, these were presented to three relevant professionals for their expert opinions. They pointed out some ambiguities in the format, sequence and language of the items which were improved accordingly.

After improving the instruments, pilot study was carried out to determine the reliability of the instruments in two districts -Kasur and Sheikhpura on a sample of 16 head teachers and 32 teachers. The convenient sampling technique was used for the selection of schools and teachers. These teachers and head teachers were not included in the actual/large scale study. After getting the responses of respondents, the item analysis was run using the SPSS. To estimate the reliability coefficient of the instruments Cronbach Alpha method was determined. The overall alpha value was 0.91, which was acceptable as suggested by Gay (2002).

2.5 Data Collection

Survey study was carried out by using a questionnaire. It was administered to 351 head teachers and 702 teachers for the purpose of data collection. The sample of the study was scattered in the 12 districts of the Punjab province. The researchers were unable to collect data personally from such scattered sample. Therefore, the data was collected adopting three different strategies: personally, through researchers' colleagues (researchers and teachers) or personal friends and by mail/post. Overall 948 of the total 1053 questionnaires were received back from all the 12 sampled districts. In this way, the return rate of questionnaires remained 90% of the total sample which was encouraging.

2.6 Data Analysis

A number of data analysis techniques were used to answer the research questions of the study.

The quantitative data of the questionnaire was analyzed on the basis of percentage, mean and standard deviation and t-test. Frequency based data analysis of demographic information i.e. gender and location; academic and professional qualifications; teaching and administrative experience was made. The results of demographic data were shown in percentages in the tables.

Descriptive picture of data analysis of leadership styles of head teachers is presented in the form of mean score as the research instruments were in the form of a continuous scale on the format of five point rating scale. t-test was used to compare the mean difference between the leadership styles of male and female head teachers and urban and rural head teachers.

3. Results and Discussion

The opinions of the teachers and head teachers were analysed separately as well as collectively on the basis of mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and independent samples t-test (Levene's Test and 2-tailed t-test). Besides item-wise analysis, overall analysis was also done to accept or reject the null hypotheses. The overall analysis is presented in underlying tables followed by interpretation of each.

3.1 Analysis of Teachers' Opinions Regarding Leadership Styles of Head Teachers

Overall item-wise analysis of teachers' opinion demonstrates that majority of the teachers rated head teachers as they exercised most of the leadership practices sometimes or rarely. They were of the opinion that most of the head teachers mostly concentrate on powers and sometimes they delegate powers to teachers whenever necessary (mean 3.00). They mostly look into each and every matter of school (mean 2.45) and don't involve staff members frequently in the process of decision making (mean 2.78). They sometimes encourage participants to share their views on different matters (mean 3.13). They rarely solve the problems with the cooperation of staff members (mean 2.20).

Most of the respondents opined that head teachers generally follow rules and regulations (mean 2.52) and directions of authorities strictly (mean 2.08). They most of the time monitor the academic activities closely (mean 2.51) and follow the strict schedule for official duties (mean 2.38). They don't compromise on students' discipline and always take strict actions for this purpose (mean 4.57). Majority of the teachers stated that head teachers mostly emphasize only on academic results but sometimes they give emphasis to curricular and co-curricular activities equally (mean 2.98). They rarely monitor the performance of staff actively to make sure that mistakes are not made by them (mean 2.42).

They rarely support staff members in their assigned tasks (mean 2.65) and guide them on new tasks and procedures (mean 2.57).

They rarely visit classes and help teachers in improving their teaching (mean 2.71) and provide academic guidance to the teachers as and when needed (mean 2.64). They rarely or sometimes encourage teachers to attend long and short training courses for professional development (mean 2.74).

Most of the teachers were of the opinion that majority of the head teachers rarely or sometimes motivate the staff members by providing challenges to their work (mean 2.97). They don't give respect to their subordinates (mean 2.34) and raise confidence amongst them (mean 2.96). They sometimes share authority and promote mutual respect (3.24); sometimes assign duties to subordinates according to their ability (2.98) and coach them on an individual basis (mean 3.23). They sometimes reward on good performance of colleagues (mean 3.01) and most of the times take disciplinary action against 108 individuals for their poor performance (mean 2.11). They sometimes listen subordinates' personal problems and try to remove them with full efforts (3.01) and settle the conflicts among staff members (mean 2.98). Majority of the head teachers don't arrange meetings with teachers, students and parents to know teachers and students' problems (mean 2.91). They sometimes involve parent and community in school's activities (2.87) and give patient hearing to them (mean 3.09).

3.2 Analysis of Head Teachers' Opinions Regarding Their Leadership Styles

Overall item-wise analysis reveals that head teachers rated themselves slightly more positive as compare to teachers. Mean values indicate that majority of the head teachers stated that they mostly concentrate on powers and sometimes they delegate powers to teachers according to the need of the situation (mean 3.03). They mostly look into each and every matter of school (mean 2.95) but sometimes they involve staff members in the process of decision making (mean 3.09). They sometimes encourage participants to share their views on different matters (mean 3.03) and solve the problems with the cooperation of staff members (mean 2.97).

Most of the respondents opined that they normally follow rules and regulations (mean 3.02) and directions of authorities strictly (mean 2.12); monitor the academic activities closely (2.97) and follow the strict schedule for official duties (mean 2.81); don't compromise on students' discipline and in this regard they take strict actions (mean 2.67); emphasize on curricular and co-curricular activities equally (mean 3.54). They sometimes monitor the performance of staff actively to make sure that mistakes are not made by them (mean 2.98); support staff members in their assigned tasks (3.64) and guide them on new tasks and procedures (mean 2.87); visit classes and help teachers in improving their teaching (3.53) and provide academic guidance to them (3.64).

They sometimes encourage teachers to attend long and short training courses for professional development (mean 2.79).

Most of the head teachers were of the opinion that they sometimes motivate the staff members by providing challenges to their work (mean 3.17). They always give respect to their subordinates (4.83) and raise confidence amongst them (mean 3.98). They sometimes share authority and promote mutual respect (3.01); assign duties to subordinates according to their ability (3.09) and coach them on an individual basis (mean 3.23). They sometimes reward on good performance of colleagues (mean 3.19) and sometimes take disciplinary action against individuals for their poor performance (mean 2.96). They mostly listen subordinates' personal problems and try to remove them with full efforts (3.81) and settle the conflicts among staff members (mean 3.04); arrange meetings with teachers to know teachers and students' problems (mean 3.45); arrange meetings with students and parents to know students' problems (mean 3.18). They sometimes involve parents and community in school's activities (3.24) and give patient hearing to them (mean 3.28).

3.3 Comparative View of Teachers and Head Teachers' Opinions Regarding Leadership Styles of Head Teachers

Overall analysis reveals that head teachers rated themselves slightly more positive as compare to teachers. It seems a little bit difference in the opinions of teachers and head teachers with regard to different items but it was not significant statistically. The mean values for 34 items for teachers and head teachers were 103.20 and 106.27 respectively, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparative View of Teachers and Head teachers' Opinions regarding Leadership Styles of Head teachers

Category of respondents				T-test for Equality of Means ($\alpha = 0.05$)		
	N	Mean	SD	t	df	2 tailed sig. **
Teachers	611	103.20	35.76			
Head teachers	294	106.27	33.74	-.434	609.875	.664

** 2-tailed significance value less than 0.05 shows significant difference.

Analysis indicates that head teachers had rated themselves relatively more positive than their teachers. This is evident on the basis of high mean by (3.07) and low SD values for head teachers. T-test demonstrated no significant difference between teachers and head teachers' opinion, either assuming equal variance or unequal variance for Levene's Test. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers and head teachers regarding the existing leadership styles of head teachers.

3.4 Identification of Overall Existing Leadership Styles of Head Teachers of Secondary Schools

Overall analysis of the rating of teachers and head teachers regarding the existing leadership practices of head teachers indicates that about six of the ten head teachers exercising authoritative leadership practices while four of the ten were democratic in their leadership styles. It is evident on the basis of overall mean value for 34 items. The overall mean value for 34 items was 103.55. Those head teachers who had mean value in rating less than average mean value, they were declared as authoritative and those who had more than average mean value, they were falling in democratic category. Table 3 depicts the comparative picture of leadership styles of head teachers of secondary schools.

Table 3: Comparative View of Leadership Styles of Head teachers of Secondary Schools

Leadership practices	N	%
Authoritative	175	59.5
Democratic	119	40.5
Total	294	100.0

Table 3 shows that out of 294 head teachers, 175 head teachers (59.5) were exercising the authoritative leadership styles while 119 head teachers (40.5) were managing their schools through democratic style. It shows that about six of the ten head teachers were exercising the authoritative leadership styles.

3.5 Comparison of Leadership Styles of Male and Female Head Teachers of Secondary Schools

Analysis reveals that there was a significant difference between leadership styles of male and female head teachers. Female head teachers were more democratic as compare to male head teachers. This difference was measured through testing following null hypothesis by using Independent Sample t-Test.

HO1: There is no significant difference between leadership styles of male and female head teachers of secondary schools.

Table 4 displays the comparative view of leadership styles of male and female head teachers of secondary schools.

Table 4: Comparison of Leadership Styles of Male and Female Head teachers of Secondary Schools

Gender	T-test for Equality of Means ($\alpha = 0.05$)					
	N	Mean	SD	t	df	2 tailed sig.**
Male	189	99.07	35.02	-5.233	903	.000
Female	105	111.57	33.83			

** 2-tailed significance value less than 0.05 shows significant difference.

As can be seen from table 4, the female head teachers were relatively more democratic than their male counterparts. It is evident from relatively high mean and low SD values for female than male head teachers. T-test revealed significant difference in the leadership styles of male and female head teachers, either assuming equal variance or unequal variance for Levene's Test. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between leadership practices of male and female head teachers of secondary schools was rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$.

3.6 Comparison of Leadership Styles of Head Teachers of Urban and Rural Secondary Schools

Analysis shows that there was a significant difference between leadership practices of urban and rural head teachers. Rural head teachers were more authoritative than their urban counterparts. This difference was calculated through testing following null hypothesis by using Independent Sample t-Test.

HO2: There is no significant difference between leadership practices of head teachers of urban and rural secondary schools

Comparative picture of leadership styles of urban and rural head teachers of secondary schools can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5 Comparison of Leadership Styles of Head teachers of Urban and Rural Secondary Schools

Location	T-test for Equality of Means ($\alpha = 0.05$)					
	N	Mean	SD	t	df	2 tailed sig.**
Urban	80	111.12	34.84	4.018	903	.000
Rural	214	100.70	34.80			

** 2-tailed significance value less than 0.05 shows significant difference.

Table 5 indicates that head teachers of urban secondary schools were more democratic as compare to rural head teachers.

T-value 4.018 for leadership practices of urban and rural head teachers is significant at 0.05 level, either assuming equal variance or unequal variance for Levene's Test. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between leadership practices of head teachers of urban and rural secondary schools was not accepted at $\alpha = 0.05$. It can be concluded that urban and rural head teachers had significant difference in their leadership styles. Urban head teachers were more democratic than their rural counterparts.

4. Discussion

The intent of this study was to analyze leadership styles of head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan and compare them with regard to gender and locality. In this regard, findings of the study reveal that most of the head teachers follow authoritative and bureaucratic leadership style as they mostly concentrate on their authority and powers; they look into each and every matter of the school and don't involve staff members frequently in the process of decision making. They mostly follow the rules and regulations and directions of the authorities. Most of the head teachers want to keep status quo and they don't manage and implement the change efforts. It is interesting that previous researches (Iqbal, 2005; Kunwar, 2002) also support these findings. The reason for this might be that the educational administrative structure in Pakistan is almost centralized. Although during the last decade some policy reforms has been initiated and powers have been delegated at district level but head teachers are still receivers and implementers of policy decisions rather than playing an active and energetic role in school improvement (Shah, 2003). They are bound to rules and regulations and directions of authorities. Due to this reason they might be bound to exercise these practices. Findings of the present study also substantiate that most of the head teachers don't observe classroom teaching regularly. They don't visit classes and provide feedback and academic guidance to teachers and help them in improving their teaching.

This might be due to the reason that head teachers of secondary schools have a lot of administrative work. Most of the time, they are busy in correspondence and meetings with higher authorities and dealing with administrative affairs. Therefore, it is not possible for a single person to observe classroom teaching regularly with a lot of office work.

Another finding reveal from this is that the female head teachers were more democratic as compared to male head teachers. They mostly follow the democratic and distributed leadership practices while managing their schools. There may be many reasons to indicate that male and female leaders may differ to some extent in their leadership practices. One such reason recognizes the possibility of ingrained sex differences in personality traits and behavioral tendencies. Previous research studies also found that female head teachers were more democratic and participative as compared male head teachers (**Eagly, Karau & Johnson, 1992**; Eagly & Johnson, 1990)

5 Recommendations

5.1 Recommendations for Implications

- ❖ Head teachers should share authority and delegate some necessary powers to staff members. They can delegate powers related to instructional supervision, students' discipline, financial aspects, leaves of the staff, academic work plan, conduct of exams and co-curricular activities and community affairs etc.
- ❖ Head teachers should involve staff members in the process of decision making. They can involve them in decision making related to targets setting, achievement of targets, academic work plan, conduct of curricular and co-curricular activities, and celebration of special days and other matters of schools.
- ❖ Different committees should be organized to perform different functions of schools. In these committees senior and experienced teachers and community representatives may be included.
- ❖ School Management Committees (SMC) or School Councils should be functional properly. The work of these committees should be seen on ground not only in papers.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

- ❖ A study is also recommended to explore the relationship and the impact of different cultural and social variables with leadership and school effectiveness in Pakistan.
- ❖ Further research on a national level sample may be conducted so as to make proper decisions before policy formulation and execution in the field.
- ❖ Similar research may be conducted in other provinces of Pakistan to develop leadership model at secondary level. Further research may involve larger sample.

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