



Original Article

Practices of Transformational Leadership and Their Effects: A Case of Secondary School System in Sindh

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Abstract

This study investigated the practices of transformational leadership of headmasters in government secondary schools of Sindh. Qualitative research methodology based on semi structured online interviews was conducted in order to answer the research questions. The research adopted purposive sampling to get interviews from thirty schoolteachers who were teaching in government secondary schools in district Larkana. The qualitative raw data were transcribed, categorized, and themes were generated for the understanding of research. The findings of the data revealed that the practices of the transformational leadership play an important role in changing the school system if practiced in these government schools. Mostly, the government secondary schools of Sindh suffer due to lack of transformational leadership, who can work effectively and efficiently for the success of the school system. Headmasters lack the fundamental qualities like motivation, mentoring, inspiration, and intellectual consideration to transform the school culture for achieving the desired educational goals. Only few schools run smoothly and achieve success due to the presence of transformational leadership. The study recommends that the role of transformational leadership should be enhanced by recruiting and placing efficient and capable headmasters in such schools for accomplishing the educational goals.

Keywords: collaborative culture, intellectual stimulation, school system, transformational leadership

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered the most significant factor to boost the national success and development through human development for achieving the national goals and visions (Veeriah, et al., 2017). The successful and efficient process of education is entirely connected with the smooth and effective functioning of the school (Khasawneh, et al., 2012). In addition, effective leadership practices play a central role in the public management and administration (Hartley, et al., 2019). It has been asserted that globalization has revolutionized the world, which has greatly influenced the education system with its constant and recurring changes. Producing students well acquainted with the importance of education and properly equipped with skills and knowledge, requires a greater level of efficiency in order to face the unending and multiple challenges and changes of global education. Diligent and efficient outcomes of any school can never be achieved overnight because it is a constant process, which can be achieved due to the role of the leader of the school. The leader perceives changes and tries to mold the school culture through various positive changes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). The role of the headmaster to enhance the conducive culture of the school is extremely crucial and inevitable to achieve the objectives and goals.

Countless steps and initiatives have been taken to improve the literacy and standard of education in Pakistan; however, the state of public sector has hardly improved across the country. Mughal (2015) opines that the quality of education especially in the public schools of Sindh is in worst condition due to lack of effective leadership. LaRocque, (2019) mentions the report of Sindh education sector plan (SESP 2014-2018) that the significant ratio of public sector schools in Sindh is facing serious problems due to the lack of efficient leaders; hence, academic sessions are not completed successfully. Headmaster, being the leader, should significantly contribute to the culture and environment of schools and the success of students (Dahri, 2015) found in their studies that public schools in Sindh are badly suffering due to absence of proper mechanism of management and owing to lack of efficient leadership. Mostly, the headmasters are indifferent towards their actual duties and incapable of taking decisions in managing affairs effectively. Researches have revealed that different practices of leadership are practiced in the school system by headmasters.

Problem Statement

The condition of education in Pakistan especially in government schools of Sindh has been in an appalling state since the inception of Pakistan and has affected the overall environment of the schools. What is actually needed is an effective and efficient leadership for the success of the entire process. A large number of studies have revealed the mixed results of practices of different leadership being adopted in schools by headmasters. This study investigates the practices and attributes of transformational leadership and their effects on secondary school system of Sindh.

Research Objectives

- To investigate whether the practices of transformational leadership are being exercised in government

secondary schools of Sindh

- To know the effects of practices of transformational leadership on the secondary school system of Sindh

Research Questions

- Do the headmasters working in government secondary schools of Sindh exercise the practices of transformational leadership in their schools?
- Do the practices of transformational leadership leave their effect on the school system?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have asserted that the existing education system has generated transformational leadership style for effective and proper functioning of schools to achieve the desired goals. In his research, Alfraih (2014) while defining transformational leadership, asserts that it the most vibrant and unique concept in which leaders and subordinates interact closely with each other by influencing their level of motivation and inspiration. Avci (2015) justified in his research that transformational leadership is the name of ability through which the leader puts in utmost efforts to prepare and motivate their subordinates towards the accomplishment of their goals and objectives. Therefore, it can be rightly claimed that effective leadership has an important role in implementing the changes right from determining the goals until their accomplishment (Wirba, 2015). Transformational leadership assists in revamping the mission, vision, and commitment for the achievement of goals; therefore, this attribute of leadership is generally considered as the most appropriate, relevant, and proper to cater to the existing needs of a school system. Khan, et al., (2022) believe that Pakistan's weak school culture is the result of absence of effective leadership.

Transformational leadership provides the chance and motivation for all aspects of the school to work together on the basis of a worthwhile value system, so that instructors, students, the community, and teaching staff are eager to help the school achieve its goals. This style of leadership involves setting a clear vision, fostering a sense of collective purpose, and empowering followers to take ownership of their work. The key to rapid school improvement is the principal's transformational leadership. It can assist the school in resolving significant issues and achieving levels of development at various stages (Donkor, et al., 2021). There are three stages in the development of transformational leadership: embryonic, formative, and mature. Principal's transformational leadership qualities can be evident in the production of ideas, creation of a shared vision, power sharing, earning credibility, and experiencing success. There are numerous examples in practice that demonstrate the importance of principals' leadership in the development of schools. As a result, it is the principal's responsibility to improve transformational leadership (Yang, 2013). Several studies reinforce the conclusion that transformational leadership has an impact on teachers' perceptions of school conditions, their commitment to change, and the organizational learning that takes place (Fullan, 2002). With respect to outcomes, leadership has an influence on teachers' perceptions of progress and implementation of reform initiatives.

Aydin, et al., (2013) assert that the most significant difference in leadership practices between high and low performing schools occur due to shared vision and challenging the process. The study indicates that the practices of transformational leadership have biggest impacts on the achievement of the students at large, as it creates the motivated team to work with the elements of motivation and inspiration. Those schools can achieve their sure success if they are managed and administered by the transformational leaderships. Schools having low and high performances are strongly and greatly marked by the leadership practices. Research further indicates that the shared goals and achievements are always achieved by the practices of transformational leaderships. Universities and principal preparation programs can use this quantitative study along with other studies to revamp their leadership curriculum to develop principals who are knowledgeable and highly qualified to meet the increasing demands of the principal ship (Quin, et al., 2015).

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework model consists of four basic practices of transformational leadership such as Inspirational Motivation (IM), Idealized Influence (II) Individual Consideration (IC), and Intellectual Stimulation (IS) and indicates their effects on the school system (Figure 1). This study tried to explore these practices accomplished by headmasters at secondary school level in Sindh.

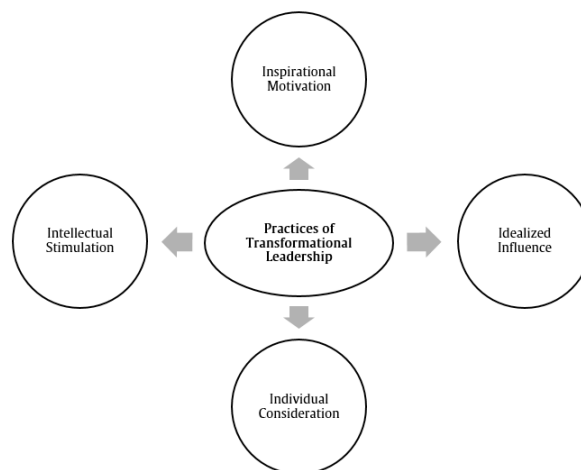


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This research study adopted a qualitative methodology and semi structured online audio interviews were conducted among purposively selected teachers working in public secondary schools in district Larkana. The reasons of selecting teachers working in secondary schools was due to the state of education in the government schools. It was aimed to know about the practices of transformational leadership exercised by first line managers, that is, the headmasters. The views of teachers regarding their leadership were very vital to analyze the practices and effects on school system. In-depth telephonic interviews were conducted regarding the practices of transformational leadership among the government secondary schools of Sindh. These interviews assisted the researchers to gather important and comprehensive knowledge regarding the practices of transformational leadership and their effects on school system.

A total of 30 semi structured interviews were conducted with teachers working in different government secondary schools. These interviews helped the researchers to ask detailed unstructured and probing questions from the participants. Online telephonic interviews made the participants more at ease than physical interactions to express their views and opinions freely. Thematic analysis by Maguire and Delahunt, (2017) was used for this study.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The data revealed the practices of transformational leadership adopted in different government secondary schools. The data collected through telephonic interviews were analyzed thematically. By analyzing the collected data, four major themes emerged. Figure 2 given below reveals the description of major themes and sub themes, which are explained in detail.

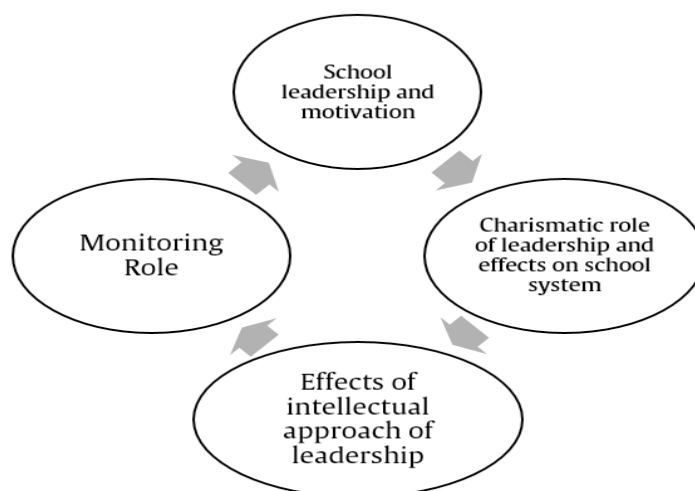


Fig. 2. Thematic Diagram of Effects of Transformational Leadership

School Leadership and Motivation

The data showed after thematic analysis of online interviews that approximately 25 out of 30 teachers were found less motivated in the school system. They shared that their headmasters had nothing to do with the business of motivation and inspiration with staff and students. One of the teachers shared:

"I have been serving in this school for fifteen years and I have worked under the supervision of three different headmasters, but none of them tried to motivate and inspire staff and students. We are often discouraged to work."

The views of an experienced teacher showed that the majority of headmasters lack the abilities to practice transformational leadership in their respective schools. The lack of motivational role of headmasters affects the mental and behavioral approach of teachers. The effects of such leaders have far-reaching effects on the staff, students, and overall school system. It becomes quite difficult for teachers and students to strive for the betterment of educational goals and accomplishment of tasks as determined before the start of academic session. Educational goals are interlinked with the role of leadership being displayed in the educational institutions. Another teacher claimed:

"The headmaster of our school is neither punctual nor insinuates visionary approach to inculcate motivation and inspiration among teachers and students. The headmaster fails to appreciate the services of the teachers. He never attends school assembly nor tries to observe teaching and learning inside the classroom. His approach is just as a figure head of the institution."

Opinion of the teachers reveals that the practice of existing leadership of the government schools is direly missing. The style of leadership is often traditional with no motivation and inspiration, causing regressive effects on the overall school system. One senior teacher having 25 years of experience opined:

"My present headmaster is very efficient and energetic in all activities of teaching and learning. His practice of leading the staff is highly vibrant and teachers work hard ...to impart quality education to students."

The opinion that the senior teacher reflected was that the role of leadership is very important for the success of school. Efficient leader leads his team through his own examples and inspiration for the success of the school system in all curricular and co-curricular activities because this leadership is transformational and believes in the vibrant motion and rhythm of the school. Staff and students are always eager to be part of a vibrant environment provided by the efficient leadership.

Charismatic Role of Leadership and Effects on School System

Data collected through interviews reflect that the role of charismatic leadership is very pivotal for defining and determining the goals and objectives of the educational institutions. However, the majority of teachers shared that their schools were running successfully without charismatic leaders. The sense of team work to improve the quality of education is always poor, thus teachers and students are lost due to the lack of a motivational environment. One teacher teaching science subject to class 7 exclaimed:

"Our headmaster is neither credible nor tries to convince his staff through his motivation and commitment and due to this poor practice, the staff and students are demotivate."

The views of teachers clearly show that the school leadership is not transformational, and it does not believe in developing school culture by bringing transformational changes in the teaching and learning process. Absent of effective and efficient leadership creates crisis and vacuum, which badly affects the overall school system of the school. When the school leader lacks credibility in the eyes of staff and students, the school system runs at the mercy of circumstances.

A young and energetic teacher who teaches English subject to class 8 claimed:

"I have been serving in this school for five years, but my stay has been miserable owing to lack of motivation and inspiration as the school runs like office having no status quo at all. The headmaster neither works nor practices for positive changes."

Views reflect a sad and pathetic picture of headmasters in practicing their duties for the interest of their institutions. Their practices are detrimental to the concept and philosophy of education to promote the quality of education and uplift the school system. Teachers are neither motivated nor inspired and are treated like biological organism without directing and motivating them for their obligations.

From the interviews of the teachers, it has been exposed that only two or three teachers of one or two schools shared positive remarks about the role of headmasters as transformational leaders. One of the teachers commented:

"Luckily, we have a very efficient headmaster. He works for the success of the entire school system. He is

highly extrovert and ... changes in the school. He always appreciates ... education and due to his unique practices of leadership ... put in extra effort to make our teaching and learning practices worthwhile."

It was evident that the changes in the school system are bound to happen if the headmasters practice transformational practices in managing the school affairs efficiently and effectively. Teachers and students can play a very important role in making schools successful if they are shown a path by the leaders. The process of teaching and learning can get infinite achievements in terms of success of students and school system if their headmasters are positive and struggle for positive changes in the environment of school.

Mentoring Role

A leader is indeed the mentor and trainer of staff and students, who always tries to put in efforts for the grooming of his team through his leadership. He drives the potential and energy of staff for the best interest of the school system and with the purpose to create the best culture for teaching and learning to accomplish the desired goals as chalked out before the commencement of the academic session. A leader always thinks about the revolutionary changes to be brought about in the government school system. Headmasters should have a broad approach towards the needs and requirements of the staff and students and try to address them by conducting counselling sessions and training. One senior teacher claimed:

"Our existing headmaster possesses the spirit to win the hearts of staff and students and utilize their potential and skills for the best interest of the institution. He strives to show empathy, which eventually creates a sense of success among all teachers."

The views of the senior teachers indicate that the government secondary schools of Sindh suffer due to lack of efficient leadership, who can up lift and renovate the entire system. Headmasters are the first line managers, who have to see the system thoroughly by understanding the needs and requirements of school system for the accomplishment of goals. However, their poor and unreliable role has damaged the school system. Teachers and students are the major stake holders of the school system, who can play a vital role in the development of their schools, if supported their leaders. Teaching and learning outcomes are the result of a healthy and teamwork environment, which needs to be strengthened and supported by headmasters of their respective schools.

Only one and two teachers out of 30 shared positive views regarding efficient leadership:

"Our headmaster is punctual and sincere and takes all efforts for the welfare of staff and students and due his transformational practices our school has carved a name. People in large numbers aspire to get their children admitted in our schools as it is the best school in the area. We owe this credit to our headmaster who believes in teamwork."

Opinion of the participants clearly indicate that the function of school system is dependent on the quality and practices of leadership of the school. Strong and efficient leadership always produce the best results in terms of curricular and co-curricular activities because it strongly believes in the process of change through motivation and inspiration in the school system. People often desire to get their children admitted in those schools where the operation of the school is run by transformational leaders. The environment and culture of schools are two realities in which the schools are working for its survival. These realities can be forecasted positively only due to the efficient and transformational role of school leaders. School headmasters can influence and motivate the staff and all stake holders through their extrovert and unique practices of leadership, but on the other hand, the environment of the schools can be unhealthy and negative if the headmasters are least interested in overhauling the entire environment of school.

Effects of Intellectual Approach of Leadership

Educational institutions are dynamic entities working for the welfare of people by ensuring literacy among them. These dynamic entities can function properly with all its importance and significant effects if the leaders who manage the affairs of these intuitions are intellectually sound in their approach of understanding things clearly and thoroughly. Headmasters are responsible people because they have to work on uplifting the institutions and developing the skills of their teachers. Their intellectual approach needs to be vast, sound, and energetic so that they can understand and manage the affairs of the intuitions. Ironically, the data collected from the interviews of the teachers clearly reveal that the intellectual approach of the majority of headmasters is poor and they resist to assert the development of staff and students. Therefore, they neither take initiatives nor any decisions regarding the welfare of the intuitions to accomplish the determined targets. The existing system works in a traditional way instead of treading on the path of modern education based on techniques

and skills.

A teacher who teaches Pakistan studies shared:

“I have never seen any intellectual activity conducted at this school for the academic grooming of the teachers. Our headmaster has no intellectually and visionary plan for the school.”

Views of the teachers reveal that intellectual activities have no room in the government schools of Sindh due to lack of transformational leadership. Schools without intellectual activities can be void and traditional and in these circumstances the success of the students and overall school system can never be achieved.

Discussion

The condition of education in Pakistan has always remained in a very critical condition since the inception of the country. Various efforts were put in time and again to ensure the quality of education and smooth running of education institutions by every successive government. Sadly, the miserable state of education did not improve due to different factors. Globally, the efficient and effective leadership is being considered as the proven phenomenon in managing the smooth and effective affairs of the education system for making the goals of education come true (Khan, et al., 2022). Only diligent leadership having capability and potential to understand the very concept of education can run the institutions in a befitting manner based on their skills and knowledge. Dahri (2015) asserts that leadership having the capacity of knowledge, skills, experience, sound communication, presentation, and professional orientation can change the overall system of education. Transformational leadership is an efficient attribute, which realizes the basic ground realities and problems of the institution on the basis of the leader taking exemplary initiatives for the betterment of education, culture, and environment. The sad state of schools of Sindh is the result of weak leadership, which has neither vision nor commitment towards the betterment of the school system (Yang, 2013).

Data collected from the teachers reveals that the practices of transformational leadership are almost missing in these institutions. Consequently, the entire system of school has been facing serious challenges to produce quality education in line with the adherents of educational goals and objectives. Hence, the success of students and schools as a system is at stake and does not accrue positive results for the integration of the school system (Quin, et al., 2015). The opinions by the participants clearly reveal that the role of headmasters is not motivational in their schools. Their actions never motivate and inspire their teachers, eventually it leaves bad effects on the behavior and overall system of the schools. Only few teachers shared their views that their headmasters play a significant role in the motivation of all stake holders including teachers and students. All teachers are appreciated for their good work and even the problems of teachers are discussed and resolved by such headmasters. It shows that transformational practices of leadership have the potential to change the system.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership plays an important role in changing the environment of schools and success of the students. Only efficient and effective leadership ensures the smooth and proper exercise of curricular and co-curricular activities for the accomplishment of desired goals, which are determined before the commencement of the academic session. Weak and traditional leadership undermines the very culture of the school due to their pathetic and indifferent approach towards the activities of the school system. Transformational leadership is the proven attribute of effective and efficient leadership, which always brings revolutionary changes owing to their intellectual and motivational qualities. The majority of headmasters are traditional and possess poor skills for creating and developing healthy and conducive teaching and learning environment inside the school for the success of the system. The environment of the government schools is not positive for the staff and students to get successful results both in curricular and co-curricular activities. Policy makers should recruit and promote effective and efficient leadership role in the schools if the educational goals have to be successfully achieved.

- The headmasters of these schools should work sincerely to develop their transformational leadership skills to play an important role in the teaching and learning process, which is very important for the success of the entire school system.
- This study is geographically limited and confined to the district Larkana only, which can be expanded and replicated to the whole province based on a large sample size.
- A comprehensive study could be conducted both in public and private educational institutions to assess the existing grey issues of leadership.

Since this study was qualitative in nature, based on telephonic interviews of selected teachers of government secondary schools of Sindh, its scope could be extended by conducting both at primary and higher secondary level for the sake of seeking a clear and rich picture regarding the crisis of transformational leadership. This would definitely enrich the existing body of knowledge, which is very important to change the culture of schools and make them as the hub of imparting quality knowledge among students of such schools.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared no competing interest.

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