

Leadership Styles and Practices and their Impact on School Administration: A Case of Primary Schools from Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract: The study sought to identify the leadership styles and practices of primary school headteachers and their effect on school administration. The study also sought to determine the extent to which teachers were involved in decision-making. The questionnaire instrument was used to collect data. A sample of 175 teachers teaching in the primary schools in Narowal district participated in this research. These were preferred because they were accessible and could provide information on leadership styles and the administrative practices of their school heads. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the primary schools only 175 were returned. The statistical package for social surveys (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. The research revealed that the democratic leadership style was widely used by primary school heads. Teachers were involved in decision-making but they were not involved in setting the agendas for staff meetings. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should staff develop school heads through workshops on how to conduct staff meetings and apply the participatory approach to decision making.

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1. Introduction

According to Kasambira (1998a) an effective leader is one who is able to work with and through others to accomplish organisational goals. The effectiveness of a leader is mainly dependent on how his or her subordinates view him or her as a leader. The leader's effectiveness is also depended on how the school head perceives himself or herself. The head has some idea about him or her and this influences the way they run their schools and perform their duties. If the subordinates view them differently than in almost certain the head will have problems in performing his/her duties since the staff will behave in line with the way they perceive the school head. If the views of the school head fail to match those of his or her subordinates it is usually to the detriment of the school and its students (Pashiardis 2001). Mukeredzi and Chireshe (2005a) identified some of the leadership styles used by school administrators. These include the autocratic style where the head makes all decisions, and the persuasive style allows the head to make decisions and explain them to the subordinates to accept one's point of view. There is also the consultative style where subordinates participate in decision-making while the head retains the right to make the final decision and the democratic style involves making of decisions on the basis of consensus. Although the head can use a variety of styles as they run their schools their subordinates tend to identify them with specific

leadership styles. The head can associate themselves with a leadership style, which tend to influences his or her administrative practices.

Mukeredzi and Chireshe (2005b) observed that leadership styles used by the leader have a serious bearing on the achievement of organisational goals (Mukeredzi and Chireshe 2005c). School effectiveness focuses on how well an organization achieves its set goals, thus an effective school is run in such a way that the goals of the school are achieved (Mukeredzi and Chireshe 2005d). However school effectiveness is also dependent upon the effectiveness of the school head and this study therefore had to find out the leadership styles and practices of primary school heads and their effect on school administration.

1.2 literature review

1.2.1 What is Administration

Musaazi (1982) defines administration as a social process concerned with identifying maintaining, motivating, controlling and organising human and material resources within an integrated system designed to achieve predetermined objectives. However Kasambira (1998b) considered administration as a process of working with and through others to accomplish organisational goals efficiently. Kasambira (1998c) identified the administrative tasks of the school head as

coordinating, directing, and supporting the work of others by defining objectives, evaluating performance, providing organisational resources building a supportive psychological climate, dealing with parents as well as resolving teacher conflicts. Zvogbo (2005a) quoted Mintzberg (1973) who identified the administrative roles as involving interpersonal roles, information roles, as well as decision-making roles. From the definitions given above it one can conclude that administration deals with people, their activities and their interpersonal relationships in a systematic structure that is intentionally designed. According to Zvogbo (2005b) administration takes place in middle management and micro levels of a system where planning, organising, directing and controlling are done within the framework of given guidelines, procedures, and policies set by senior management. As such administrators implement programmes, policy statements and strategies of the organisation designed at micro level by the Chief Executive Officers or the Senior Management Committee.

1.2.2 The Concept of Leadership

According to Kasambira (1998d) leadership has been the object of extensive study by researchers and practitioners. Today there are almost as many different definition of effective leadership has been defined as the process of influencing group activities towards achievement of goals, or guiding in the direction, course action or opinion. Lunenburg (1991) defined leadership is use of power to influence the thought and actions of other people. Effective leaders according to Drucker (1967) do not make many decisions but they focus on important one that has an impact on the larger aspects of the organisation. They try to think through what generic and strategic rather than solve daily problem. Effective leaders have a commitment or a vision and shape people around their commitment or vision Traits of Effective Leaders. A good leader usually can succeed in most organisations.

1.3 Leadership Style

The term “style” is equivalent to the manner in which the leader influences subordinates. Immergart (1988) Leinwood and Duke (1999) Richmond and Hilson (2003 as cited by Jingpinsun (2004) new leadership styles as sets of leadership behavior actions that can be measured or compared. According to Zvogbo (1997c) identified three types heads in Zimbabwean schools. These are Autocratic head, Laissez-faire head and a Democratic head.

1.3.1 The Autocratic Head

He or she administers the school virtually by decree and his or her word as both children staff and parents often desert law Autocratic heads. The

decisions, which he autocrats make, are often resisted because they are made single-handedly. An autocratic head resists the role of School Development Committee and find it difficult to operate in an environment, which demands collective decision-making. Slezak (1984a) cited Likert who viewed the autocratic school head as an exploitative authoritarian. This type of leader was seen to be successful in uneducated societies but schools are made up of both educated people.

1.3.2 Laissez-faire Head

This head let thing happen virtually by them. The head does not initiate new innovations neither does the staff learn from him/her. The school operates by the moment of the staff and the head and reluctant to interfere in the way things are run. There is not definite policy to guide all those involved as the life of the institution.

1.3.3 Democratic head

Democratic head is one who administer by consensus through consultation with the staff, parents and heads informed decisions because of benefits in the experience and wisdom of other professionals in and outside the constitution. The democratic head can also be known as a consultative leader who reserves the right to make the final decision Slezak (1984b). This head involves staff in guiding the schools development. All members of the school including students and staff have an input in the running and welfare of the school. Subordinates find pleasure and satisfaction in working with rather than under this type of head. Imaginative school heads should mobilize this knowledge, staff and expertise of all teachers to bring real development in the school. In most schools however the head tend to pull in one direction while the rest of the teachers pull in another direction. This is usually caused by personality class's differences in age and qualification. In such case the administrative system becomes inefficient and the teaching and learning process ineffective.

1.4 The role of the Teacher in School administration

Teachers' participation can be used as a tool for de-colonization of administration in education and increase a sense of ownership and consensus. The term participation implies decentralization of control over administration process and activities, increased individual autonomy in administration decision making and increased sense of responsibility if the individual – Increase the level of shared control over Educational Planning and Implementation and Evaluation. Participation reduces them and as perception of the role of teachers and administrators in the hierarchy of authority. This participation enhances efficiency; sharpness competencies and increase goal oriented understand better, the

administrative system, goals, procedures and policies. Participation is the most effective way of strengthening the role of teachers in administration of schools. Some scholars like Pascader called for de-concentration, which consist of delegation of authority by central organisation to external or internal groups.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Design

The descriptive survey design was used in this study. This design was preferred because there was need to summarise the views of the subordinates towards the leadership style and the practices of the school head in the daily administration of the school

1.5.2 Sample

A sample of 240 primary schoolteachers was selected from Narowal district primary schools teachers. These were preferred because they were easily accessible and they could also provide the relevant data on the leadership styles of their school heads. Narowal district was also preferred because most of school heads studied with the AllamaIqbal Open University for a degree in school administration. The purposive sampling procedure was used to select the respondents from different schools from whom data was collected.

1.5.3 Data Collection

A questionnaire was used to collect data. Teachers responded to closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire-enabled teachers participate in the study without fear of victimization because of assured anonymity.

1.5.4 Research Questions; the research addressed the following research questions:

1-What are the views of teachers on the style of leadership and administrative practices by the school head?

2- What is the effect of the Headteachers leadership style on school administration?

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1. Sex Composition

Teachers	F	%
Male	86	47%
Female	89	53%
	175	100

There were more female teachers (53%) participants in this research than males (47%). This could be a reflection of the distribution of male and female population in the in urban schools where there tend to be more female teachers than male teachers.

The results of this study though were not affected by the gender variable.

Table 2. Age of Respondents

Age	F	%
Below 30 years	40	22.5
30 – 35	64	37
36 – 40	45	26
Above 40	26	14.5
Total	175	100

Majority of the respondents in this research were between 30 and 40 years of age. These were experienced teachers who worked in the same school under the same school head. These teachers provided the data on the head's leadership styles and practices.

Table 3. Qualifications of the Respondents

Qualification Category	f	%
Diploma in Education	147	81
B. Ed	17	116
BSc.	7	48
BA	4	27
Total	175	100

Majority of the respondents in this study were qualified teachers holding a diploma in education. A minority of the teachers had undergraduate qualifications either Bachelor of Education degree or Bachelor of Arts (2.7%) or Bachelor of Science (4.8%).

Table 4. Work Experience

Experience in years	f	%
Below 1 year	9	5.1
1 – 5	115	65.7
3 – 4	50	28.6
Above 4	1	2.3

The respondents had between 1 year and five years of work experience and these teachers provided reliable data useful to this research.

Table 5. Years of Working in the same School

	f	%
Below 1 year	10	5,7
1 – 2	140	80
3 – 4	25	13,7
Above 5	0	0.6

Most teachers (80%) had worked for more than two years at the same school under the same school head. Such teachers could give relevant information

relating to the leadership styles of the school head as well as issues relating to school administration.

Table 6. Decision Making in Relation to Staff Meetings

Item	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Teachers Involvement in setting the agenda	41	17,8	65	28,2	175	76,1
Teachers contribution during meetings	145	63	60	26	25	10,9
There is conflict between school head and staff during meeting.	41	17.8	60	28.2	124	53.9
School head dominates during staff meetings	93	40.4	61	26.5	76	33

Most teachers in primary schools were not involved in the setting of the agenda for staff meetings. However they contributed significantly decision made in the meetings. Teachers revealed that there was no friction arising from the proceedings of the staff meeting. The heads did not dominate their subordinates during the staff meetings, as such meetings were considered democratic. The school heads communicated effectively on policy issues to their subordinates. The relationship between the teachers and the school heads were cordial. Most teachers indicated that they worked harmoniously with their school heads however some 16.5% of teachers revealed that they did not work well with their school heads. This is a cause of concern since some schools seen to have teachers who do not work well with their school heads. The research also found out that the school heads are involved in resolving resolved conflict among staff. School heads supervised their subordinates by 47.8% while a few teachers disagreed with the view that supervision by the school heads was objective. Majority of teachers indicated that the school heads had good human relations with their staff and they equitably distributed resources in their institution.

Table 8. The School Head's Leadership Styles

Statement	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
The head is democratic	68	29.5	62	43.5	100	27
The head is autocratic	33	14.3	64	57.8	133	27.8
The head is laissez-faire	19	8.3	68	62.2	143	29.5

Table 8 shows that most school heads used democratic, style of leadership. Very few heads (19%) used the laissez faire style of leadership. The result of the study reveals that in some school the heads were autocratic and the majority of respondents could not tell whether the heads were democratic or not.

Table 9. Views on supervision by the School head

Statement	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Subordinates informed of supervision on time.	144	62.6	60	26	26	11.3
Heads help teachers develop professionally	108	48	62	26.9	60	26.1
Head subjectively supervises subordinates	108	47	66	28.7	56	24.3
Head has knowledge of modern teaching techniques	122	53	62	26.9	46	20

Before carrying out supervision the school heads teachers informed teachers of their impending visit to their classes. Teachers benefited professionally from supervision done by the school head knowledgeable of the modern methods of teaching although some teachers refute by (46%) view.

Table 10. The Teacher's autonomy in curriculum implementation

Statement	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Teachers are involved in choice of class to teach.	92	40	64	27.8	74	32.2
The school uses standardized schemes of work	117	59	66	28.7	47	20.4
The teachers use standardized lesson plans	39	17	62	26.9	129	56.1
The head prescribes teaching methods to be used	101	43.9	62	26.9	62	29.1

Most teachers were not involved on allocation of classes to teach, at beginning of the year. Most schools use standardised schemes of work, which are prescriptive; hence teachers are guided as to what to teach and how to teach it. However teachers had freedom on what teaching methods employed during lesson presentation.

Table 11. Managing Staff Relations

Statement	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	f.	%	f	%	F	%
The head promotes good relation with staff	126	54.8	62	26.9	42	18.3
The head encourages teamwork	49	21.3	64	27.8	117	50.9
The head creates conflict among staff	44	19.1	62	26.9	124	53.9
The head promotes cliques among staff	4	1.7	204	88.7	22	9.6

The research found out that heads promoted good staff relations and good school community relations. They also encouraged teamwork; among staff as such their efforts are useful in ensuring achievement of set objectives within an institution. As such school heads in Narowal district are creating a conducive environment for improved performance from their teachers.

1.6 Discussion

Most teachers were not involved in setting the agenda for staff meetings. However the contribution made by teachers during staff meetings contributed significantly to decision made by the school head. Meetings were held in a conducive environment for individual member participation. The school heads allowed debate among staff members and reached decisions by consensus. School heads had good interpersonal relationships with their subordinates. The teachers indicated that the school head, resolved conflict among staff and distributed resources fairly among staff. The school heads supervised their staff effectively and worked well with their subordinates.

Although the majority of the school heads were using democratic leadership style there was evidence of a few who were considered autocratic and laissez faire. These heads impact negatively on school effectiveness. It would be in the best interest of Ministry of Education to identify such schools then use them as examples for other schools during staff development. Heads of schools informed their subordinates of classroom supervision in time and they contributed significantly to the professional growth of staff. Subordinate teachers also considered supervision by the school head as subjective. This means in term of assessment teachers were not satisfied with the assessment criteria to classroom teaching. The heads were also considered to be highly knowledgeable to modern teaching techniques. In decision making the participatory approach was highly relevant. The head involved teachers in choice of classes. However there was standardization of

schemes of work, but not the lesson plans. The head had good relation among staff and encourages teamwork. Schools that are effective have little conflict and a lot of team work.

1.7 Findings

The research found out the following; most school heads used the democratic leadership style while only a minority used the laissez faire and autocratic leadership styles. School heads had good interpersonal relationships with their subordinates and used the participatory approach to decision making. All school heads prepared staff meeting agenda without consulting their subordinates. Teachers participated actively during staff meetings and contributed to decisions, which were a result of the staff meetings decisions. Classroom supervision by school heads was objective and contributed to the professional development of staff since they were considered highly knowledgeable of modern teaching techniques. The school heads did not involve teachers in class allocation this can be a source of ineffectiveness in teaching and learning. Generally the school heads prescribed the scheme of work format but allowed teachers to design their own lesson plans. School heads encouraged teamwork and resolved conflict among staff.

1.8 Conclusion

While the democratic leadership style was used by most school administrators Ministry of Education officials need to take action in helping some of the school heads who continue to use the autocratic leadership style and the laissez faire leadership style which tend to negatively affect the effectiveness of such schools.

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