

## **Best Leadership Practices in High Performing Government Girls' School in Quetta**

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### **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this study was to identify the best leadership practices in girl's high school. Leithwood theoretical framework was used. This research aimed to identify the best leadership practices followed by the principals and to analyse its contribution towards performance of schools. In this study, two schools were considered as sites of the study. From each school, the principal and five teachers were selected, which make a total of two principal and ten teachers. The data collection and analysis were done through interviews and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that both transformation and transactional leadership practices were used. All the four factors of leadership practices were evident in the data. According to the findings, the goal of both the principals were high performance expectations in school.*

**Key words:** School, Best Practice, Leadership, Quetta, High-Performing

### **Introduction**

Education plays a vital role in the improvement of a country. According to Hussein (2010) to make the country progress faster, improve the quality of education. Education can work as a catalyst to reform the old traditional systems and thinking in to new and modern state. If an organization wants to flourish, succeed and survive with the rapidly changing competitive environment, then it should adapt education (Northouse, 2001). However, a large number of change creativities do not lead to the positive significances that change representatives aim (Burnes, 2004). Leaders are one of the essential and most important models in the field of education administration (Hallinger, 2003). Leaders have the ability to influence, demonstrate and motivate. Leadership is the key of trust that comes from the respect of others (Bush, 2014). Leaders are the one of the major key drivers in enhancing the production and innovations (Lievens, et, al 1997).

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Unfortunately, after sixty-nine years, the education system of Pakistan did not experience drastic change and numerous reform movements failed to succeed (Ministry of Education Pakistan, 2013). The major issue has remained students' dropout and low performance. School leadership has been considered as one of the most important factors inducing students' attraction, holding in the education system, and improving their performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Caldwell and Spink (1998) established that head teachers played a key planned and empowering role in involving structural feature of improvement into teaching-learning process and students' results. Ainley et al. (2005) also noted that principals play a key role in forming cultures that are professionally encouraging for teachers, which increase their sense of efficacy and opinions that have the capability to make a difference to students' learning.

School reforms have also been considered successful, those which have excellent leaders. Leadership is about improvement, direction and influence (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006). Therefore, school improvement is dependent on the school leadership. According to a research, in the National Education Policy 2009 school leadership is given the least attention (Bahadur, Amir, Waheed, & Kiazai, 2017). It has been identified that there are schools in Quetta, which have transformational leaders' qualities and demonstrate some best practices of leadership. The qualitative research studies on leadership lack in most of the educational research in Balochistan context too. The purpose of this study is to explore the best practices of leadership in selected Government Girls High School Quetta, Balochistan through qualitative study.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Theoretical framework plays an important role in the research process. It helps researcher from research questions to results and discussion. This study is based upon four factors best practice leadership theory summarized by Leithwood et al., (2003). The four factors are:

- (1) Setting direction
- (2) Developing people
- (3) Redesigning the organization
- (4) Managing the instruction programs.

## **Literature Review**

Lahoti and Sahooo (2017) examined that good leaders are good for improving education. The evidence data was collected from India on various comprehensive outcomes such as enrollment of the pupils, school funding, learning level and infrastructure of the schools. Aas and Brandmo (2016) examined revisiting instructional and transformational leadership. Their main purpose was to classify two conceptual leadership roles for principals as instructional and transformational leadership (IT and TL) In Norwegian school schools. They also conducted 149 school leaders national training program at the University of Oslo. And their leadership preference according to their self-scheme. The findings which they analyses during their research were seven domain as supportive leading, management by objective, trust in standard distributed leadership.

Shirrell (2016) find out new principal s accountability and commitment in low performing schools. The main aim of this paper was to demand exert control over teachers, practice, trust collegiality and commitment, the survey and interviews with 12 first year principals took of the urban public school. The findings showed that some principals seek to build commitment towards accountability as complementary while some principals change their views during first year.

Berkovich (2016) examined current school leaders' transformational leadership to discuss their issues of critical voices concerning feasibility of school leadership and suggested that transformational leaders should not abandon transformational leadership practices. Abbas, et al (2009) explored effects of leadership on employee performance in Pakistan. The main five factors of leadership practices were coaching, training, development, empower participants and allocation. The other practices were dealing with the problems, solving situation which were faced by the employee, and to perform school activities.

Simkins, Sisum, and Memon (2008) examined school leadership in Pakistan exploring the head teacher's role. This research examined the leadership of school in developing country like Pakistan. In Pakistan, the head teachers experiences in Karachi were explored. The first stage was involving interviews with six head teachers that focused on the importance between school systems and constrain. The second stage was about the (three case studies) that showed that leadership behavior is influenced by national culture.

## **Methodology**

The school performance and leaders performance are correlated. A qualitative research study was conducted to examine the leadership in two selected girls' high school in Quetta. Two different schools of girls were selected to examine their overall leadership best practices. A qualitative research model, it "allows an investigation to recollect the complete and meaningful characteristics of phenomenon. The analysis focused on some practices in school and how these practices helped to improve teacher, students and school principals' performance or overall school performance. A qualitative method supported researchers to talk to the participants. It provided an open understanding of what was happening in the schools.

## **Research Design**

The design of this study was based on multiple-case study design (Yin, 2009) where two best performing girls' school from Quetta City were selected as cases through purposive sampling. The selection was based on their performance in secondary board examination and also their popularity in the vicinity.

## **Sample**

In the study, the researcher worked on two selected girls' high- schools as sites/cases of the study. From the two selected schools, 2 principals and 10 teachers were taken (five from each school). The teachers who could give more information were selected. Hence, the teachers who were having more than five years of teaching experience in their respective schools were selected in order to get authentic and reliable data.

## **Tool for Data Collection**

There are many tools that could be used to collect data for qualitative studies such as observation, interviews, documents, artifacts, biographies (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). In this multiple-case study, one of the main methods of obtaining data was through interviews. Semi-structured interview were used as tools for data collection. Interviews were then transcribed. The interviews were considered suitable for this study because the question being explored was highly personal to the participants.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore leadership best practices of selected girls high school that were performing well. The data collected from interviews was analyzed where themes and sub-themes emerged. However, the

coding was deductive in nature based on theoretical framework. The Following were the main themes and sub-theme.



**Figure 1:** The Themes that Emerged from the Data.

### **Setting Direction**

The first theme of leadership practices that was evident in data was ‘setting direction’. This theme is also present in the theoretical framework. The sub-themes under this main theme were having a strong vision, setting goals. However, the ‘high-expectations for performance’ as a sub-theme did not emerge as a sub-theme in data.

According to Leithwood (2008) that a successful best leadership practices is to design and develop an organization for the school future by developing a shared vision, relevant goals, and inspire the principal and teachers to demonstrate the high expectations for work. Setting direction is the way to a basic stimulant for the principal practices. Vision provide building capacity for successful leaders and the findings showed that leaders in selected high performing schools were relatively giving focus more time on the developing and achieving vision of the schools. As a school principal shared, “I keep observing things, class students, and teachers, or if I find out any mistake I concerned that teachers or the students to guide them. “As another Principal from school A Claimed:

Yes, I have many plans for school improvement because in 2013 when I came this school was like a forest there were no plants, painting, planning for school. I always try my level best for school to upgrade it more and the portion which we are sitting that time it was not like this in proper way and we sit together discuss different plans.

Moreover, the leaders from all selected schools gave clear instructions and rules to the teachers in order to clarify their tasks. For this purpose, the teachers were being directly informed about their roles, duties or responsibilities by the

principals. Moreover, notices, orders were being delivered on base of regular meetings conducted, A school Teacher from school A told about the principal that” “There is no financial resources but our school principal use to denote its own zakat for the vision of the school. While another teacher from school, B explained that, “our leader appreciates them when we use new thing in our work for the vision of school”.Principal of all the schools showed activeness to generate resources involving their own efforts. A Principe from school B presented her experiences by saying that:

When I was appointed as the school principal, the school seemed like a forest school’, which needs many improvement and we all get together did so many works for the school improvement, me and my staff always denote their Zakat for school needs like the students uniforms. Books ... I have tried my level best to make sure that material resources are provided maximally.

Leaders also include teachers in decision making that results in building trust and teamwork among themselves. A Principal from school A shared, “Towards achieving educational Mission, aims, I keep the plan in a proper way”. ”Another principal from school B expressed, “My managing instruction is to best for my school to achieved the goals”.

If there is, no any goals to progress it will be difficult for a school to find out important towards leadership behaviors. It is to help promote the recognition of school goals planning process.in high schools; leaders adopt well personal relationship with teachers by involving them in making of decisions, which further in trust building and leading tom frame themselves.

Creating high performance expectations clarify describing responsibility for every teachers, to their work contributes vision is needed to b succeed. The whole school staff must to know what is expected of them. Leaders are paying attention to their efforts thus leaders must clear the performance to determine central behavior in front of the school principal.

### **Developing People**

Developing people is the primary aim to bring ability in the school staff and students of the school by evaluating skills, rewarding and managing it. Principal role is to develop staff member by emphasizing improvement in teachers, classroom practices by stimulating them intellectually with support and appropriate. Developing people through individualized support may be in the form of shared decision-making, providing opportunities for professional development, coaching and constructive feedback to teachers.

By individual support, means work better to manage yourself and your team and to act more effectively on your shared future to interact more skillfully with your environment beyond your area of action. Individual support and helping connect about what matter it's to join people up their experiences as the school principal from school A express it's thought related to it: " me and my teachers try to help students financially and academically".

When leaders provide all students and staff with the individual supports they need to exceed a common standard by providing appropriate support to schools staff to ensure improvement of student's achievements. Principal from school A said, "I do support the staff and raising them towards their objectives of lessons".

Leaders' shows respect to all staff concern about their feelings needs conversation the leader's respect for his or her colleagues and concerns about their emotional understanding emotional and support.

Intellectual Stimulation involves in developing new and different solutions to common problems and conducting work in new ways for school. Leaders challenge the process and meet old new rules, traditions and processes. Further, school principal involve school staff in the discussion and stimulate new ways of thinking. Intellectual stimulation this type of behavior includes encouraging staff and students' creativity, challenging the status, aiming for reliable improvement, enabling staff to disagree with leadership.

The part of the leader that sets an examples for the staff is to follow the consistent school values and improvement in the practices of the school strategy. As a school principal from school a said, "Ambitions that core values are recognized by Modeling core values in one's own practices." Another teacher from school A as said, "Perfect motivation is that when they serve as role models with the proper behaviors and attitudes toward the pupils of the school".

### **Redesigning the Organization**

Successful educational leaders develop their schools students learning must be effective organizations by support and sustain performance of administrators, teachers as well as students. However, organizational circumstances sometimes will be dull due to the use of ineffective practices. Leaders have to think out of the box for the redesigning of their schools. Otherwise, they would not be able to compete with others and their performance will be low. Three best practices included in this category emerged from the data analysis included building collaborative culture, restructuring, connecting the school to outside.

The leaders also focused on building collaborative culture in their schools in order to redesign their schools. In this regard the principal of school A explained, “My staff teachers are able to build more collaborative cultures in their school and I also suggest practices that are collaborative in my school”. While another principal from school B expressed, “For the staff of my schools in challenging circumstances, creating more positive collaborative and a culture is necessary”.

School structure and culture both are two edges of a coin. For keeping up a culture of change, the leaders in both schools created plans for restructuring of their schools, for teachers and students. As school principal from school B claimed, “ I always try my level best for school to upgrade it [schools]”. While another teacher from school A mentioned about the restructuring of the school as, “creating arrangements for problem solving of school with staff is always in her planes”. This quote indicates that the school leaders involved their staff in problem-solving techniques so they may think out of the box and differently. While, another teacher from school B explained, “Our principal do involved the staff by making them understand that what improvements school needs which plans they are going to make and what plans you have so on...”.

### **Managing the Instructional Program**

Finally, schools leaders were able to manage the instructional programs by the supervision of what was being and happening in the classrooms and schools. They managed the school improvement with the capacity and interest of schools efforts through retaining staff, which was leading the schools in challenging circumstances. A principal from school A shared, “Teachers teaching method... I lead them and guide them by their active coordination and I do tell them being in these roles to complete their goals of teaching the children”.

Monitoring school is analysis of the students’ functions especially on staff progress. In this regards school B principal explained:

...and I manage the classrooms, first by observing which teacher is absent in which classroom, how the teacher is teaching them, how the children are sitting in the classrooms, and what the students are doing. After that I check their attendance... after that I take some test let me know how much they are in the water and I must checked the students copy what does the teacher did ,did she do any correction.

While the principal from school B of another school claimed:

I do visit the classes daily I observed everything’s of my school the teachers the students or the classrooms. How they are teaching, which



methods they are applying in the classes the students are involve during the lecture or no.

### **Discussion, Future Implications and Conclusion**

The findings of the study are inspiring. First, of all achievement of a school depends on sincere and dedicated heads. If they face any difficulties, they have the ability to overcome those difficulties. Furthermore, findings of the four factors of best practices of leadership were clearly found in this study. These findings are in line with Leithwood et al. (2006) that leaders in order to bring change in school settings need to set directions, mange instructional programs, developing people, and redesigning the schools.

According to Leithwood, et al. (2006) in the setting direction category both the vision and setting goals practices are strongly related to creating high performing exceptions for school improvement. For Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), for effective leadership the school leaders have to become professional leaders to help the school to become a professional learning community to support the performance of all key workers including teachers and students.

The best practice leadership factors were also developing people which shard intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support on an appropriate model. In others words, the leaders in high performing school, the most effective educational leaders effect the development of human resources in their schools (Yukl, 2004). Through providing individualizes support because a successful educational leaders show respect for its school staff and concern about their feeling and needs an educational institution to improve individualize. Besides the findings also indicated that the all selected schools heads offering intellectual stimulation to encourage reflection their staff to examine about their work and rethink how it can be proofed. They also enable the teachers to understand and gain complexities of necessary changes in school (Simkins., et al, 2008).

While from the findings both school heads attend to redefine the school within consideration building collaborative culture, restricting and connecting the school environment with internal and external relationship. The heads of both the school A and B focus mostly to develop strengthening school cultures that represent norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that promote mutual caring and trust among all, schools cultures sets a tone and context.

A school restructuring by leaders through monitoring and adjusting structures and functions of the school are also very important practices needed for school improvement (Berkovich, 2016). Restructuring of a school is a skeletal framework, which can enhance students' performance and complete schools

goals and effective educational leaders bring change in structure and functions that establish positive condition for both learning and teaching.

Lastly, the findings revealed that managing the instructional programs by monitoring school, providing instructional support and staffing the programs were also some best practices found in the study. Effective leaders monitor school and teaching learning process and solve the issues and problems in the school instructional process (Hallinger, 2003); and this important factor is missing in majority of Pakistani schools (Ministry of Education Pakistan 2013).

This study has some implications as well. Firstly, the existing and future leaders might consider these best practices to initiate and succeed in the process of change for improving the performance of their schools. Secondly, there should be any kind of institution that may provide in-services training to school principal in these best practices. Thirdly, high-performing schools should be recognized, be given rewards to inspire the heads teachers for work for a betterment. Future research should interview parents, students, district education officers to explore the best leadership practices and such studies can be conducted in other settings and in boys schools as well.

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