

Leadership in Academia of Pakistan: Perception of Crisis Situation and Solutions

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In current study, aim was to explore effective academic leadership in Pakistani higher education institutes. It was an attempt to understand how people in academia perceive effective academic leadership and what are the qualities expected in an effective academic leader? It was also attempted to explore if academicians feel that there is a crisis of leadership in Pakistani higher education institutes? What are the reasons and solution for this crisis situation? Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of teachers, students, and psychologists. Three focus groups were conducted one after another. Sample ($N = 21$) included 13 women and 8 men with age range 21-50 years. Sample was selected from different private and public universities and hospitals of Lahore. Emerging themes were analyzed using bottom up thematic analysis. Results indicated that an effective academic leader should have IQ and EQ, be visionary, and should bring everyone together. The participants mostly agreed that there is leadership crisis in Pakistani higher education institutes. They described various reasons for the crisis situation which mainly implied the responsibility to existing leaders, infrastructure, social decline, and policies.

Keywords. Effective academic leadership, crisis, higher education, perception, reasons, solution

Leadership is probably the most researched phenomenon in organizational, educational, and business fields; however, it is difficult

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to describe one agreed upon definition of leadership (Yukl, 2002). There are as many definitions of leadership as many persons attempted to define the concept (Stogdill, 1974). Bennis and Nanus (1985) identified over 350 different definitions of leadership four decades ago. And the only thing all agreed upon was that leader is the person who exerts influence over others.

One type of leadership which is gaining convincing attention is 'leadership in education' which is also named as 'academic leadership', 'instructional leadership', 'teacher leadership', etc. Although, this concept is not new, but it gained momentum in past two decades (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Academic leadership is considered different from generic leadership for having academic context, lack of strict hierarchical structures, and an expectation of collaborative style (Marshall, Adams, & Cameron, 2001). Moreover, the concept of 'collegiality' (winning followership) is very important in higher education (Scott, Coates, & Anderson, 2008). Pakistani academic leaders (at vice chancellor level) are usually answerable to government, board of governors or Higher Education Commission (HEC), not to general public as such; thus it is different from political leadership.

The purpose of this study is to explore how people in academia perceive effective academic leadership and an effective academic leader. Pakistani leadership has its roots in dictatorship and autocracy and educational institutions are no exception. As Oplatka (2004, p. 438) describes that head of educational institutes in developing countries behave as a 'king in his realm', therefore, the current study is aimed at exploring if people in academia feel that there is a lack of true leadership and if yes, how this crisis situation can be tackled and what are solutions for this crisis situation. Abdullah (2011) considers that lack of true/effective leadership is in fact crisis of leadership.

The question arises why effective leadership is important? The quality of leadership makes a significant difference to educational institutions. Effective leaders can provide ample opportunities to the learners to learn and to produce better learning outcomes. Educational leadership empowers individuals with new ways of providing guidance (Khaki & Safdar, 2010). The educational institutes are undergoing changes because of globalization, commercialization, and ever increasing competition of being at good position in world ranking of institutes (Scott et al., 2008). All these circumstances have hit the concept of 'traditional university'; so to remain viable, universities must build their capacity to respond promptly, positively, and wisely to this interlaced combination of dynamic forces (Fullan, 1993 & 2003), which is difficult to achieve without having effective academic leadership.

To fully comprehend the situation of effective academic leadership in Pakistan, it is important to discuss the worth of higher education institutes (HEIs) and their current situation in Pakistan. The quality of higher education is directly related to sustainable development of societies and for societal prosperity as well. HEIs are responsible for providing skilled, knowledgeable, and competent human capital and leadership to all other institutes, however, HEIs in Pakistan are not fulfilling this role at optimal level (Bilal & Khan, 2012). Underlying reasons may be infrastructural issues, inadequate faculty, non serious attitude of university students, and use of HEC's allocated budget on unnecessary activities (Hoodbhoy, 1998) along with inequalities between HEIs, internal obstacles, etc. (Bilal & Khan, 2012).

To improve the situation, the HEIs in Pakistan are undergoing a lot more changes under the influence of HEC. It is expected from teachers to improve their degrees (having at least 40% PhD faculty in next 5 years); to actively involve in upto the mark research; and publish more if they want promotions or if they want to become viable research supervisors. Universities are under pressure to be in QS and other top universities rankings, to enhance enrollment also aiming to induct more international students and faculty; set up smart sub-campuses of universities; provide excellence in leadership, governance, and management; etc. (HHC, 2017). Achieving excellence needs effective, efficient, and visionary academic leaders and faculty having effective cognitive capacities and problem solving skills to work for novel solutions and creative input (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Fleishman, & Reiter-Palmon, 1993).

Bashir, Khalil, Perveen, and Taiyyeba (2016) also emphasize that learning process, knowledge production, and research culture is mainly influenced by academic leaders of universities. According to Lodhi (2012), falling academic standard in Pakistani universities is outcome of mismanaged and ineffective leadership, because quality of higher education is strongly correlated with leadership role (Iqbal & Iqbal, 2011).

The idea of having effective and capable leaders to enhance workplace productivity, morale, and making essential change in universities were appreciated by educational leaders, however, they highlighted certain issues which hinder their way in performing leadership tasks. These include students' behavior, staff crises, and numerous other tasks constantly demanding their attention; hence, obstruct leadership role (Gibson, 2005; Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). Most academic leaders have a heavy workload with administrative duties taking up considerably more time (Martin, Mullis, Gonzalez, Smith, & Kelly, 1999; Wylie, 1999). Lack of in depth training and increased

paper work further impede their leadership (Fullan, 1993). It is observed that academicians and other people comprehend the role of effective academic leadership in the realization of effective educational institutes, but such leadership is seldom practiced. For example, among the many tasks performed by principals, only one-tenth of the time is devoted in practicing academic leadership (Stronge, 1988). So in countries like Pakistan, lack of good leaders is observed which is not limited to political arena, but also in academia.

There can be many reasons for this crisis like outdated curriculum (Haider, 2008); lack of rewards and motivation among faculty (Rasheed, Aslam, & Sarwar, 2010) who are future leaders; professional deficiencies (Jawaid et al., 2008), political influence in leaders' selection; political pressure (Iqbal & Iqbal, 2011); politics within university (Subhani, Hasan, Osman, & Sheikh, 2012); unstandardized recruitment and retention procedures (Mahmood & Shafique, 2010), corruption (Jawaid et al., 2008), lack of accountability (Iqbal & Iqbal, 2011), poor policies and management (Hoodbhoy, 1998); and financial constraints (Khan, Ahmed, & Nawaz, 2010). Khan and Ali (2005) are of the view that teaching job is not an attractive job in Pakistan, which results in the induction of teachers for whom teaching is not a priority, and therefore, they are not much motivated. Further brain drain also worsens the situation and academic institutes are left with low caliber, unmotivated teachers who are unfit for leadership roles. Generally, in Pakistan, leadership is a game of legacy which runs through families not only in politics but also in academic institutes (especially private sector institutes) and in industry. In such situation, people do not care for leadership. Further, leaders are not willing to share their power and subordinates are not ready to lead; they might want to be in subordinate position because of lesser responsibilities (Davies & Iqbal, 1997).

Moreover, there are many socio-political factors that do not encourage teachers to be leaders. For example, the induction system is highly influenced by favoritism and nepotism (Oplatka, 2004). Bryant (1989) cites Perrow's concept of particularism, which means that 'individuals are hired based on factors that have little to do with personal competence.' In Pakistan generally, favoritism and political pressure play an important role in inducting teachers, principals, and heads of HEIs. Particularism is at work even within schools when principals are assigning leadership roles to teachers. A teacher's expertise in a particular subject is not taken into account. In short, 'political and bureaucratic interference' has been reported by Retallick and Mithani (2003, p. 406) in all areas of education in Pakistan. Educational policies are out dated (Riaz, 2009, May 20) and hierarchical structure further damages the situation.

As far as solutions to academic leadership crisis are concerned, these are also diverse by improving syllabus, evaluation practices, and infrastructure situation can be improved (Hess, 1999). Performance appraisal should be redefined (Ellet & Teddlie, 2003). Appropriate selection of leaders may involve testing for their leadership qualities and potential along their intellectual capabilities, skills, and knowledge (Scott et al., 2008). A leader must possess creative problem-solving abilities that enable them to get a competitive advantage in handling organizational problems effectively (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004). There is also a need to change self-concept of academic leaders and bring meaningful change in leaders (Shahid, 2011). Self-conceited leaders should be replaced with results oriented persons and competency should be the prerequisite rather than lust for power and prestige to resolve leadership crisis (Khan, 2011). Leadership course and trainings among head of the departments (HODs); improved communication between faculty and head of institute; and reflective practices by heads can also improve the situation (Bashir et al., 2016). Khan and Ali (2005) proposed that teachers should be facilitated with attractive salary packages, better rewards and other facilities to encourage and attract capable individuals towards academia, which may later result in better leaders.

In the light of existing literature and to address existing research gap in Pakistan current study is aimed to explore: What is the perception of teachers, psychologists, and students about indigenous effective academic leadership and characteristics of effective academic leaders in HEIs of Pakistan? What are the reasons of leadership crisis in academia of Pakistan (subject to participants' feeling that crisis is there)? Finally, how this crisis situation can be sorted out? The current study was conducted with students, teachers, and psychologists. It was an attempt to have a detailed discussion with people related to academia, so students and teachers were the most suitable choice. Psychologists were included in this study to know the psychological explanation of leadership phenomenon and as to why leaders do not act upto the mark when they do have power and execution authority.

Method

Sample

Three separate focus group discussions were conducted with students ($n = 9$; 7 female and 2 male), teachers ($n = 6$; 5 female and 1 male), and psychologists ($n = 6$; 4 female and 2 male) about leadership. Students were studying at M.Phil and Masters level in psychology and

educational leadership; university teachers were from different departments mainly psychology, educational leadership, and political science); and psychologists who were involved in university teaching along with their responsibilities in clinical settings. Age range of participants varied from 21-50 years. The sample of students and teachers was taken from 6 public and private sector universities of Lahore. Student sample was obtained by advertising about focus group in two public and private sector universities. Flyers were pasted in universities for recruiting students and teachers, while psychologists were contacted personally. Many students showed interest to be part of focus group. Interested candidates were explained about purpose of focus group and then volunteers were selected on the basis of their free time and convenience which limited the sample size of students' group. Similarly, to gather teachers and psychologists at one place at a specific time was difficult, so they were also included on the basis of their availability for focus group. Psychologists were taken from public and private sector hospitals of Lahore through convenience sampling. Although one focus group discussion with each group of participants did not enable the researcher to attain saturation point, however, because of time constraints and involvement of students and teachers in other parts of ongoing research, restricted the number of focus group discussions.

Technique for Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to develop an empathetic understanding of the concept of academic leadership. This study was not an attempt to develop universal generalizations, therefore, it was decided to adopt qualitative approach for data collection. Exploratory focus group discussion technique was followed in order to have in-depth knowledge on this issue. In this, participants were asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about academic leadership. Questions were asked in an interactive group setting where participants were free to talk with other group members (see Eliot & Associates, 2005).

Procedure

A focus group schedule was prepared to keep the flow of FGD and to keep responses of the participants on track. The questionnaire was prepared keeping in view the objectives of the study. There were 10 questions based on literature review to encompass objectives of study. After taking permission from concerned authorities to conduct the focus

group, informed consent was taken from participants. They were ensured of confidentiality and that their views will be used for research purpose only. They were told their right to skip the research anytime. Prior permission was sought for audio recording. The focus group discussions started with rapport building and introduction of participants. Both Urdu and English languages were used during discussion; moderator presented questions in Urdu, while participants were free to answer as they liked. Participants were given a free hand to express themselves, however, moderator was there to help maintain the flow of conversation. Focus group discussions ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. First focus group was conducted with psychologists. Second focus group was conducted with teachers and third focus group was conducted with students. All the focus group discussions were audio taped and transcribed later. Themes were derived from the transcribed data and were subjected to further analysis.

Analysis

After transcription the data were organized, read, and memoed (Creswell, 2007). After familiarizing with data, initial codes were generated and search for themes was started. Afterwards, themes were reviewed and were named (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by using Thematic Analysis. Bottom up thematic analysis (Frith & Gleeson, 2004) or latent level analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used in which just naming the themes was not the purpose rather underlying ideas and meaning were also taken into consideration. Inductive approach was adopted, which is a process of finding themes without trying to fit them in some pre-existing coding frame work and themes are strongly linked to data. Thus, the analysis resembles grounded theory (Patton, 1990). The transcribed data were translated into English for verbatim.

Results and Discussion

All the focus groups were conducted separately, but the findings are being described objective-wise to get a clear picture.

Perception About Effective Academic Leader

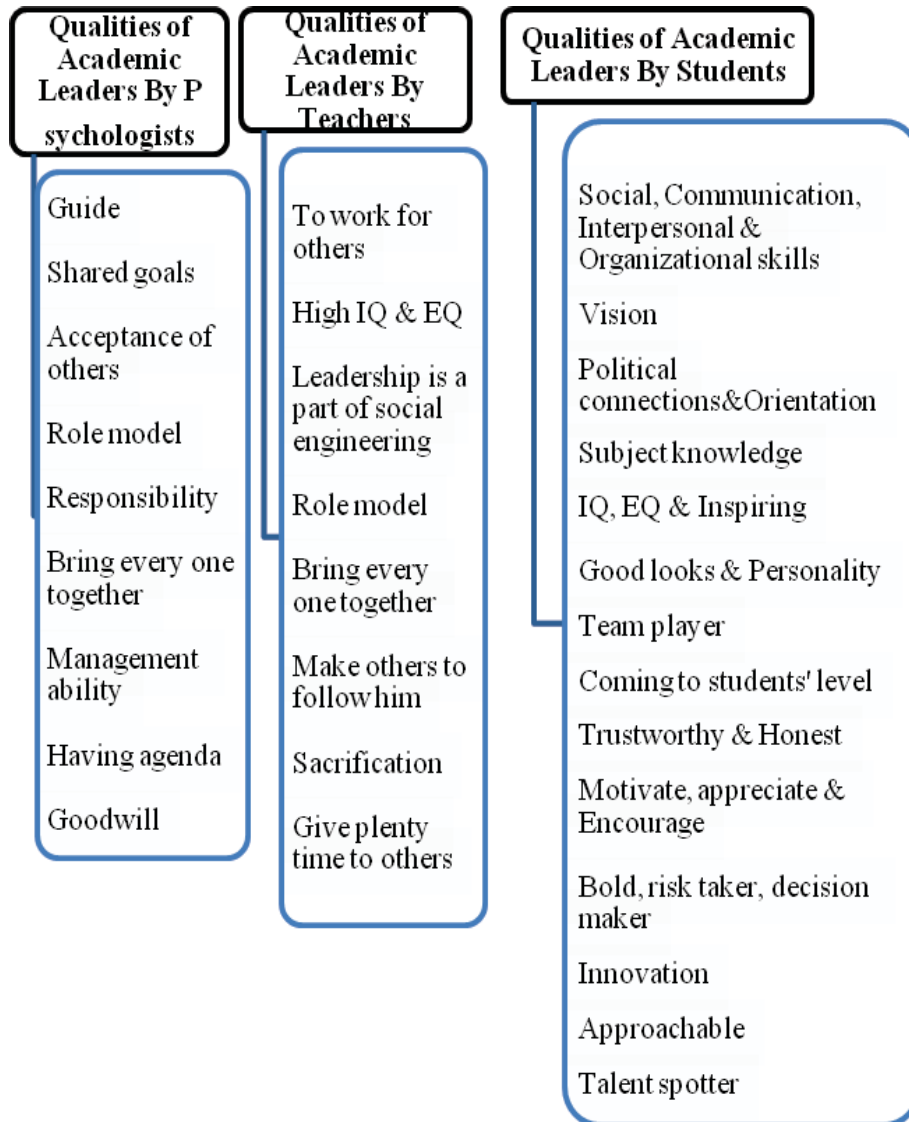


Figure 1. Leadership qualities described by psychologists, teachers, and students.

Firstly the participants were asked to describe the concept of effective academic leadership; how they perceive it? The psychologists explained the concept in terms of qualities they want to see in effective academic leader. The different qualities described by psychologists desired in an academic leader were that he/she should be a role model, guide, accepted by majority (Psychologist 1), having an agenda, shared goals, and good will (Psychologist 2). He/she should bring everyone together and should have management ability (Psychologist 3). Psychologist 4 considers leadership as a responsibility. There seems a lot of consensus among psychologists on above mentioned qualities.

For teachers, effective academic leader is a social figure and that he should be less concerned with personal things (Teacher 2). He/she must have high IQ and EQ, he/she must bring everyone together and should give time to others (Teacher 4). Being a role model he/she must make others to follow him/her and should not hesitate to sacrifice (Teacher 6).

When the same question was asked from students, there was a huge discussion, but after that they mainly described academic leader in terms of qualities the participants expect. For students an academic leader must possess social, communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills (Student 4). IQ and EQ are must along with vision (Student 5), trust, good looks, and innovation (Student 6). He/ she must be approachable and should be able to come at students' level (Student 9).

The results of all three focus groups indicated the agreement of participants of all three focus groups that a leader is one which is accepted by the followers, who spends his/her time for others. He/she is a symbol of unity and brings everyone together; acts as a guide and should have high EQ and IQ. These qualities were corroborated by previous studies, for example, Detsky (2011) highlighted six core qualities including, vision, managerial style, knowledge, social skills, organizational orientation, and personal development as basis for effective academic leadership. So social skills and emotional intelligence are the themes being identified in current study as well. Similarly, Rizvi and Amjad (2008) found good relations with subordinates and IQ as two distinct qualities (out of many) which are in line with current study. Covey (1989) also declared that it is very important to 'begin with the end in mind' while referring to the importance of having a vision. Burns (2008) highlighted the importance of trust.

Existence of Leadership Crisis and Reasons

Next the participants were asked to describe if they think that there is a leadership crisis in the field of academia and if yes what are the reasons behind that? All three groups agreed that leadership crisis exists not just in academia rather all Pakistani institutes are facing this crisis. Figure 2 gives a combined schematic presentation of reasons of academic leadership crisis proposed by psychologists, teachers, and students.

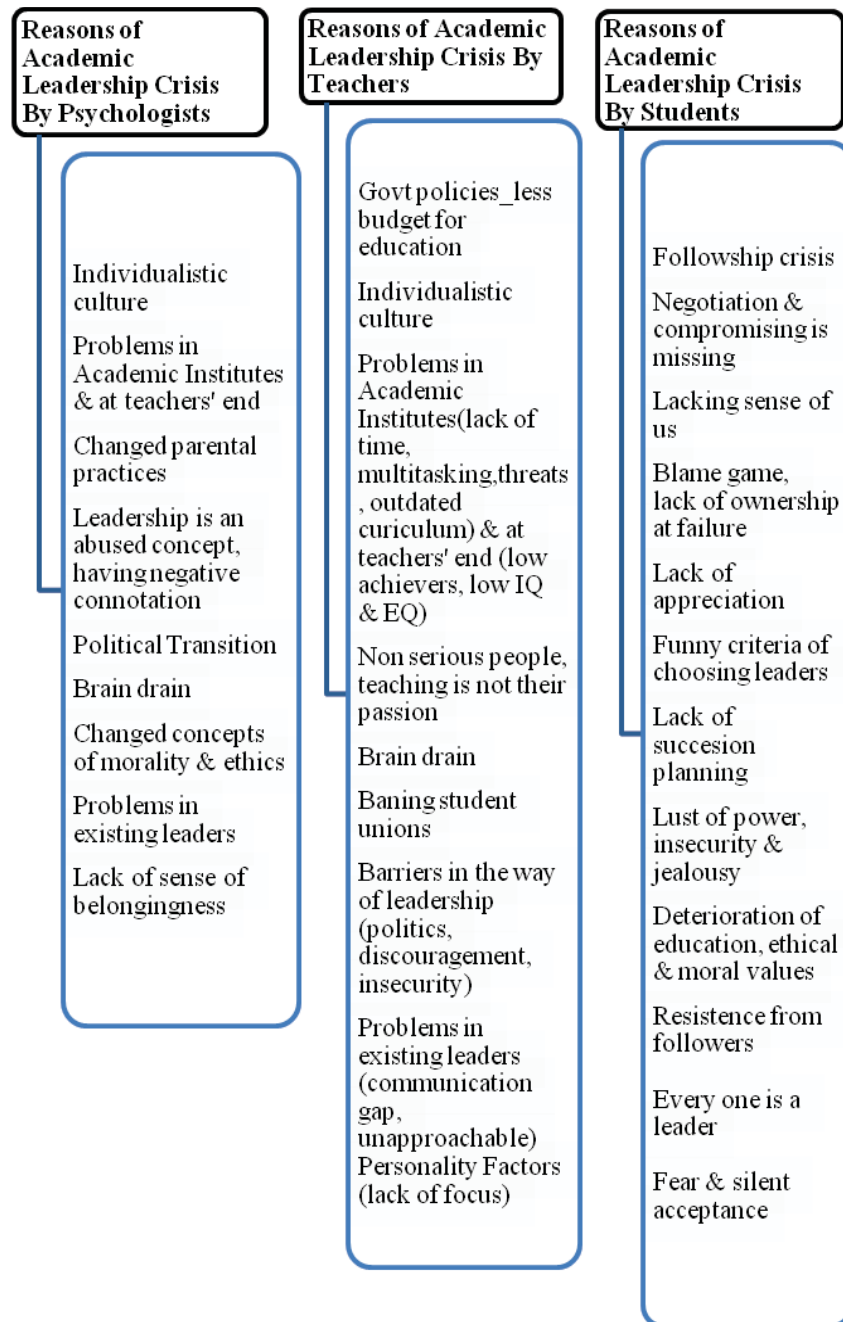


Figure 2. Reasons of academic leadership crisis described by psychologists, teachers, and students.

When asked about reasons the psychologists identified different reasons which are considered the root cause of leadership crisis. Overall participants agreed that the problem lies within system (social and political); individuals and academic institutes too are not exception; and these systems play a role in creating a vacuum of academic leadership (Psychologist 1 & 3). Psychologist 2 and 5 were of the opinion that overall Pakistani systems are on decline and leadership concept is not prevailing these days as it has been a decade back. While Psychologist 6 believed that these days leadership has become an abused concept and a leader just wants to grab everything. It was in line with Winthrop and Graff (2010) who talked about the educational crisis in Pakistan. Moreover, Khaki and Safdar (2010) also exclaimed that concept of educational leadership exists in Pakistan, but no one bothers to appreciate or implement it practically.

In teachers' group there was a consensus that societal roles are changed (Teacher 1). "Amongst us, no one is playing the proper role of parents; teacher and academic institutes too are the major cause of leadership decline" (Teacher 3). Teachers were also of the opinion that hiring process, brain drain, leaders' insecurities (Teacher 4), outdated curriculum, banning of student unions (Teacher 5), and non serious attitude at part of both leaders and followers are the main reasons of leadership crisis (Teacher 6).

For students, the reasons of academic leadership crisis were individualistic culture (Student 1); blame game, lack of successive planning (Student 2); insecurity and power-lust of leaders (Student 3); inappropriate leader selection criteria and lack of ownership (Student 5). Students also blamed the teachers' attitude as reason of problems (Student 7).

Categorization of all the above mentioned reasons into groups shows the first and mostly discussed category as 'Problems in Academic Institutes and Teachers'. The participants agreed that educational institutions in Pakistan have become more commercialized and their overall outlook is being changed. Although teaching process continues, but a lust of GPAs has emerged in students and institutes too focus on marks and positions solely (Teacher 1). The participants felt that these days "education is just about being literate; only bookish knowledge is important, and we have forgotten the purpose of education which is to create awareness" (Teacher 5). Further, "we are spreading education, but we are not promoting it" (Student 1). "Moreover, teachers do not take their responsibility and their attitude does not encourage students for achieving something big" (Student 6). As a result, "the basic infrastructure of creating leaders, which involved making

educational and extra-curricular activity groups of students, designing student bodies, academic councils, student unions by electing the representatives, etc. is no more in practice now” (Teacher 4). “Students, teachers, parents, and academic institutes all are in a race of having more and more publications and maximum GPAs” (Student 1). The result of this changed approach is an individualistic, self-centered culture in which “people are focusing much on their own needs and benefits” (Psychologist 3).

Support for these points is found in literature as well, for example, Barth (2001) emphasized the role of teachers in promoting student leadership. York-Barr, Sommerness, Ghore, and Duke (2005) also claimed that teachers are not playing their role in promoting student leadership. Teachers’ attitude as a hurdle was also endorsed by Yasin and Aslam (2018).

Another common reason of decline described by participants was that the people coming in academia are not the professional teachers. As Teacher 1 said:

“The dilemma of academia is that unprofessional, non serious, and dispassionate people come here and usually these are the people who do not fit in anywhere else. So when they come to higher levels they feel threatened by competent people that they may not dethrone them. So because of their insecurity they never let others, especially, the competent ones, to come up.”

It is also in line with Khan and Ali (2005) who described that teaching is an unattractive job in Pakistan, so teaching becomes last choice of competent people and due to lack of financial output, professionals avoid joining it.

Another point on which all participants focused was that a leader should be participative. He/she should disseminate and delegate power and authority and should not be authoritarian because authoritarian attitude kills leadership. It does not let people emerge as leaders (Student 8). Further, political circumstances were also a reason of leadership crisis (Student 9). “In Pakistan, one reason of not having good leaders is that for 30 to 40 years, we have been in political transition phase; leadership was banned because of dictatorship, so the result is that we are not having good leaders these days” (Psychologist 3).

The next category was ‘Problems in Existing Leaders’. As mentioned above one problem is that academic leaders are not competent enough and they want to grab all the resources (Psychologist 5). Second thing is that they have titles, but they are not leaders, they

take the credit in times of success, but in times of crisis they just do not own things (Teacher 1). “These leaders are political enough and never let their competitors exist; the result is there is vacuum after them” (Student 3). “In our academic institutes there is one man show. There is a lot of favoritism, dirty politics, and dictatorship. What is said should be obeyed and whoever will retreat would be in bad books” (Student 7). “Being less tolerant and taking criticism as personal attack is reason of such attitude” (Psychologist 1).

In this context, Cangelosi (2009), Subhani et al. (2012), and Rasheed et al. (2010) supported the views of the participants highlighting narrow self-interest, insecurities, and lack of motivation and enthusiasm of leaders as reasons of leadership crisis. Further, Bilal and Khan (2012) were also of the view that HEIs are indulged in dirty politics and it is in bloodstream of both the institute and the individuals. It gives way to biasness and favoritism, which demotivates honest employees.

“In earlier times, teacher was respected a lot. If he/she would say anything to students, students would accept it; but now even the parents come to fight with teacher that how dare he/she says anything to our child. Parents are fostering disrespect of teacher in students” (Teacher 6). The participants were also of the view that followers silently follow the leaders and accept the authority without challenging it, it is because the moral and ethical values are changing day by day (Student 7) that are also reasons of leadership decline (Student 9). It was also in line with Shamsi, Imtinan, and Abdul Ahad (2010) who blamed followers for silently following and accepting leaders. The participants also said that overall we lack sense of belongingness, the feeling of us, whether it is an institute or our country (Teacher 5). These points were the unique contribution by the participants, while describing the reasons of leadership crisis.

Solutions to Resolve Academic Leadership Crisis

Next the participants were asked to discuss the solutions for leadership crisis. They put forward different solutions which they think can be applied practically to improve situation. Overall the solutions suggested were based on change in individuals, institutes, leadership selection criteria, and society.

Figure 3 gives a combined schematic presentation of solutions to leadership crisis proposed by all three groups of participants.

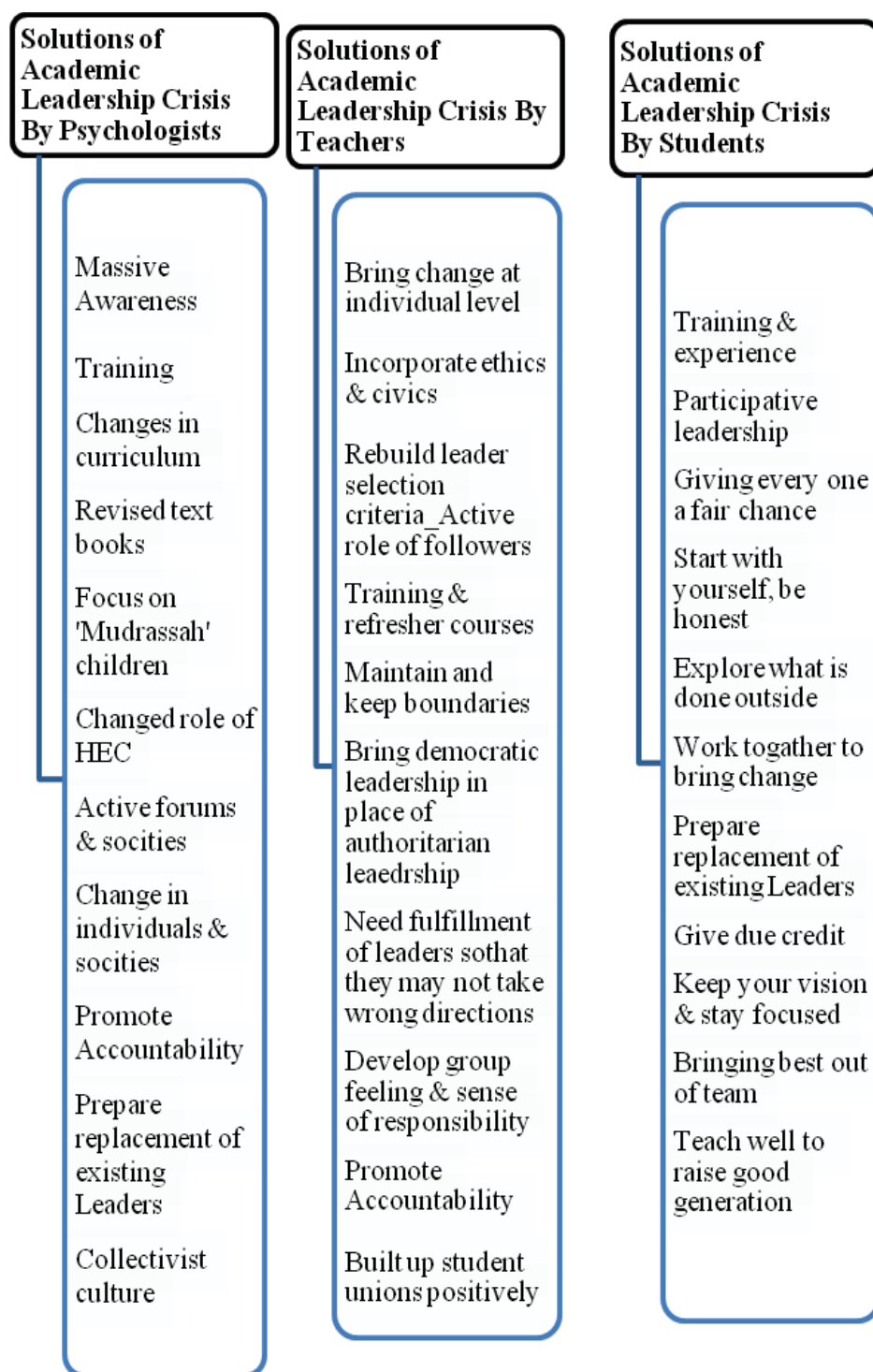


Figure 3. Solutions for academic leadership crisis described by psychologists, teachers, and students.

Psychologists suggested that everyone has to play his/her role in bringing change. They also suggested training, change in curriculum, revised text books, changed role of HEC, and promoting accountability and collectivistic culture to solve the academic leadership crisis. They also supported succession planning. According to a participant,

“We have to start at primary level. Teachers’ training is necessary. Updating of syllabi of primary school according to the requirements of modern time is necessary. And the requirements of modern time are: Knowledge of human rights; knowledge about democratic principles and culture; respect about dissent; respect for the slogan for being agreed or disagreed with each other; respect for religious beliefs of others; and to believe it is a private matter between individual and God” (Psychologist 5).

The teachers described various valuable and practical solutions of academic crisis. The teachers were of the opinion that social values and societal roles need to be redefined. We should promote democratic leadership (Teacher 1), leader selection criteria should be revisited, and training and refresher courses are must for solving leadership crisis (Teacher 6). “We have to promote such activities in which group is involved, for example, drama, sports, debating, and other competitions, etc.” (Teacher 2). Teachers also suggested accountability and stressed the need of student unions and group making. They also emphasized the need of preparing replacement of existing leaders, otherwise, there would be no one to lead after the current leader retires (Teacher 6).

The students were also asked to discuss solutions to leadership crisis. It was very alarming statement by students that they are unable to find good leaders in academia (Student 1). Yet they put forward solutions to resolve crisis issue. Students too emphasized the need of training (Student 9). Unlike teachers, they were in favor of promoting participative leadership (Student 4). They were also of the opinion that successful leadership practices of foreign countries should be adopted (Student 3). They also highlighted the importance of vision and succession planning (Student 2). They were also of the opinion that teachers should teach well so that a good generation could be raised (Student 4). A leader must believe in team building and they should bring best out of teams (Student 9).

In an attempt to combine the solutions put forward by all three groups of participants, it appeared that participants emphasized the need for change at personal, social, and organizational level. The participants agreed that we have to bring change at individual

level. We have to level. We have to take small steps to reach this destination; we have to be honest to ourselves then we can bring change in society.

They also said that we have to change the teaching structure and styles from the gross root level. There is a need of intense training overall and at primary level, especially, because from here we can bring change. We have to change the curriculum as well. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) too emphasized the importance of changes in curriculum and related it with good leadership. Raza and Naqvi (2011) also emphasized the need of updating curricula to help students to be upto the mark.

Another opinion was that we have to include knowledge of human rights and religious tolerance in our curriculum. And this should not be limited to teaching only, we have to bring policies and change in environment so that the leadership may emerge (Teacher 5). This was also supported by literature, for example, Kazilbash (1998) highlighted the importance of training for developing leadership. Similarly, Harris and Mujis (2005) and Steel and Craig (2006) also supported the same view point.

The next thing was to bring change in teaching style. It was said that teachers should promote group activities in their class. They should play their role in promoting student leadership through student unions. It was also in line with Khan and Ali (2005) who stressed the need for change in teaching.

The participants also focused that we have to prepare for replacement of existing leaders as well. If there are some good leaders, they should train their descendants, so that when they are moved away there may not be a vacuum and someone must be there to replace them. This theme was also supported by Scott et al. (2008).

In short, the discussion proved that there is a crisis situation in academic institutes and solutions are also there. However, one needs to take an initiative to resolve this issue. The point is that all three groups of participants said that this situation can be changed, but we have to start changing from one's ownself.

To get a more precise picture of all the three focus group discussions, a combined pictorial representation of the points that were similar in all three discussions is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4 reflects that acceptance by others, bringing everyone together, IQ and EQ, and vision were perceived qualities of an effective academic leader described by all three groups. Lack of belongingness; inappropriate criteria of leader selection; deterioration of social, moral,

and educational institutes; and lack of successive planning were reasons of leadership crisis. Whereas suggested solutions by all three groups were change at individual level, succession planning, and training to meet leadership crisis. As far as differences in opinion across three focus group discussions are concerned, psychologists blamed political transition and lacking sense of belongingness as reasons of leadership crisis; whereas teachers proposed unique reasons of leadership crisis were existence of non serious people in teaching, lack of opportunities, discouragement, and communication gap between leaders and followers. The students on the other hand blamed followers as more responsible of crisis in terms of followers' silence, fear, and resistance.



Figure 4. Similar points of all three focus group discussion.

As far as solutions are concerned psychologists' unique contribution was their focus on Mudrassah children, changed role of HEC, and promoting collectivist culture. Whereas teachers were more concerned about infrastructural changes, democratic leadership, and giving leaders financial independence to avoid wrong decisions. Students on the other hand focused on team work, participative leadership, and incorporating good practices of foreign systems into local systems.

Conclusion

The study indicates the existence of insight in people of academia about the problems existing in system, and fortunately they also offered solutions for those problems. One thing which was most inspirational was the determination to start change process from one's ownself. Along with supporting some previous studies, this study also contributed novel reasons and solutions put forwarded by the participants. For example, participants were of

the view that of the view that followers or subordinates are also responsible for leadership crisis as they are accepting everything silently and are not playing any role in improving situation. This point did not get any support from literature. The reason seems that in Pakistani culture there is trend to get emotionally attached to leaders and emotions usually prevent people from objectively analyzing situation. Secondly, participants emphasized the lack of role models and mentors for effective leadership. Thirdly, they pinpointed the brain drain and hiring of non academic people on academic leadership positions as reasons for crisis situation. It reflects the trend to assume that a person if good in one thing, he/she can do everything good; so we see that non academic persons are hired as head of academic institutes.

Similarly, participants also emphasized the need of successive planning and team work for solving the crisis situation. The participants were also of the view that we should promote collectivist culture, groups, and teams to build and to bring change at personal, social, and infrastructure level for, solving crisis issue.

Thus, the study supports some previously stated facts which reflects the global nature of leadership phenomenon and also introduced new findings that are indication of indigenous context or culture influence (Yasin, Batool, & Ajmal, 2015).

Implications

This study is important for people in academia, researchers, planners, and change advocates as it has the indigenous perspective of people of Pakistani academia. The findings of this study can be useful in other countries for the understanding of academic leadership crisis and its solution.

Limitations and Future Suggestions

The study was focusing at HEIs only and can be extended to study leadership at school level as well. The sample size was small; future studies can work with larger samples. The study comprised one focus group discussion only with each sample group, and the researcher was unable to attain saturation point. Future researchers can extend this study employing larger sample of public and private educational institutes till saturation point is achieved to increase generalizability and studying differential opinion across different groups.

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