Global Educational Studies Review

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School Leadership Development Program on the Performance of Secondary School Heads

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Abstract: *The research was conducted to find out the effect of school leadership development programs on the performance of secondary school heads. The major objectives of this study were to investigate the effectiveness of the school leadership development program on the professional and administrative development of secondary school heads. The study was qualitative in nature. The population of this study comprised all the heads of secondary schools in Pakpattan. Thus, all the headteachers of male and female public secondary schools were selected as a sample from each selected tehsil. For the purpose of qualitative data collection, ten senior teachers of secondary schools who were acting as the vice of the heads were taken as the sample. A structured interview was developed for data collection. The research recommended expanding the circle of the school leadership development program to the other school heads particularly the newly upgraded schools for the betterment of the whole public education sector. The study recommended planning and designing further training for those having less expertise and skill in the disciplines of service rules and information technology.*

Key Words: Leadership, Educational Leadership, Leadership Style, Capacity Building

Introduction

Education is the best source for advancement and progress in all walks of life (Nabi & Nazir, 2021). The major objective of education has not been solely to inculcate some moral values in some specific individuals but now it focuses particularly on the imperative social skills as well (Dildar, 2016). School, as an institution, is a good spring for the acquisition of formal education that is administered by a head (Yalcinkaya, 2021).

To attain the set objectives heads as the administrators play a significant role in educational institutions (Ahmed, 2021). A school head should possess the specific experience, competence, and other necessary administrative skill because he is to perform as the administrative head of the school. He is supposed to bring stability and run a school smoothly. If the school is run by a competent head, the results of the students are surely affected (Kalkan, 2020). According to Deborah (2016), ahead is responsible for the evaluation of teaching staff and all educational programs, the discipline of the learners, educational schedule and delegating authority to the suitable members.

Margaret (2016) points out that in-service training programs have many faults which

include in-service courses, conferences and workshops which are considered to be deficient as they generally appear as ad-hoc and money-oriented. The researcher suggests the necessity to find a better system to enhance the capacity and skill of headteachers in their leadership roles. Generally, a headteacher comes across such issues which are directly or indirectly concerned with instructional programs, students, parents, staff and financial matters (Santhakumar, 2017). Karadag (2020) finds that the development of a school depends on the school administration which brings changes keeping pace with the socio-cultural and scientific changes in society.

The school leaders produce cooperative culture with the help of teamwork where every member is empowered and thus, the school leaders become a key element in the school's success (Bennet, 2017). However, educational administrators perform all responsibilities of administration and management in Pakistan. They set the goals, develop a vision, collect the resources and manage the manpower to implement school policies and achieve the desired results (Ahmed, 2021). According to Brundrett (2016), keeping the significance of leadership development of the heads of the schools, the United States of America, in 1998, launched school leadership development training. France and other European countries urged the same. In the 1980s, the United Kingdom started development programs for the senior staff in schools.

In Pakistan, the National Education Policy (2009) has reinforced the significance of establishing ongoing professional development for the heads (Nabi & Nazir, 2021). The National Education Policy 1998-2010 suggested a considerable increase in the effectiveness of professional development through administrating in-service training for educational administrators (Suhag, 2020). Margaret (2016) is of the view that education is a basic determinant of success in all sectors even in school leadership and it has been proven that there is a drastic change in the effectiveness and efficiency of an educational institution when the leadership development of

a head is increased.

The recruitment of the heads of schools and selection is carried out mostly through the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC). PPSC advertises and carries out the whole process of filling the vacant posts of heads of public schools (Odhiambo, 2018). The finally selected candidates who have passed the written test and interviews are then referred to the school education department to be appointed (PPSC, 2017). It has been made mandatory for the newly inducted heads of the school to undergo compulsory two months of induction training by the Directorate of Staff Development (Now, Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development).

Professional development pieces of training of headteachers have not been successful and result-oriented in the past, particularly in the Punjab province of Pakistan. Quaid Academy for Educational Development, Lahore conducted a TNA (Training Need Analysis) and pointed out that school heads needed intensive training in the educational leadership domain (Yusuf, 2016). Various pieces of training have been launched for the heads of the schools but for the first time, on a large scale, comprehensive training for all the heads of public secondary schools in Punjab (Pakistan) was launched. With the collaboration of the British Council, school leadership training program was offered widely particularly in developing countries including Pakistan to achieve the desired educational objectives while equipping the heads of the educational institutions with personal skills, professional skills, updated knowledge and boosts of the leadership approach (British Council, 2015).

The main focus of this study was to discover the effect of the School Leadership Development Program on the performance of the heads of secondary schools in Punjab. This research study can assist the school leadership, educational authorities and education policymakers with the most recent data, thus enabling them to consider the effect of the School Leadership Development Program when making decisions for the future. In recent years,

the position of school heads has become a multi-layered responsibility and this study will provide an insight into the dynamics of school heads' professional development.

Head's Role in Quality Education

The modern age has put great emphasis on quality education and good applicable policies of government make it possible (Nabi & Nazir, 2021). The new era eyes on the exploration of new knowledge focusing on the quality education that can only be provided through educational institutions.

Research has proven that quality education is directly influenced by good leaders. The government has released less budget to the educational institutions, specifically to the schools that caused the decline the schools. In Pakistan, quality education needs great reform in the education sector (Nabi & Nazir, 2021). The heads can assure the quality of education inside or outside of the classroom by improving the school climate, collaborating planning and providing guidance.

Personal and Professional Traits of a Head

A head of the school as a leader possesses a very vital position. In all situations, he is a status leader. But he is supposed to possess some particular characteristics of leadership which are personal, professional, social and physical. According to Kalkan (2020), a school head being a leader should be honest, sympathetic, mentally strong, inspiring, possessing ethical and religious values, bold, problem solver and fair-minded.

Karadag (2020) is of the view that the head of a school should possess leadership skills and all the ethical qualities to form a peerless character and stature. He needs to be well-trained, self-controlled, well-disciplined and well-mannered. The elements of good knowledge, intelligence, the agent of change and teamwork are very important in his success. It is notable that a school head ensures the provision of instructional and professional leadership through his personal efforts, thus,

he becomes a professional leader in the school.

Heads' Selection

The schools need dedicating, committed, competent, value-led heads who are responsible, motivated and possess a clear vision. This is why it is considered a real matter to structure heads' jobs and prepare an absolutely proficient and dedicated class of persons to lead a school. Lonyian (2018) further narrates that different countries adopt different criteria for the recruitment of headteachers which includes the appointment through direct posting, and selection through interviews on the basis of experience. Some African countries do not consider specific training for the heads whereas Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore have made pre-service training mandatory for the heads. Odhiambo (2018) points out that in Pakistan, high school heads are selected through Public Service Commission or are promoted as heads on the basis of seniority and merit.

Heads' Preparation in Pakistan

According to Odhiambo (2018), sufficient significance has been given in the National Education Policy 1998-2010 to the professional development of school leaders. It has emphasized the effectiveness of the professional development system for educational administrators. Similarly, decisions have been taken to bring reforms in all areas of in-service training of headteachers.

Malik (2018) has pointed out that the head of a secondary school is inducted in BS-17 or BS-18 according to the strength of the students but the school with larger strength of about 800 hundred is run by the principal of BS. 19 or BS-20. The Ministry of Education in Pakistan is mainly responsible to select and prepare the heads of the schools. The secondary schools are classified through the gender of male and female. The public Service Commission of each province generally recruits and selects the heads of schools after advertising the desired posts in newspapers and websites. In the advertisement, the detail of qualifications, experience, age and other requirements of the

candidates are advertised. After the scrutiny of their applications, the candidates undergo written tests followed by an interview (Punjab Public Service Commission, 2017). The finalized and selected persons undergo the induction training at The Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) (now, QAED, Lahore) which is the main provincial level in-service training department. QAED is now responsible to conduct the induction and professional training programs for school principals.

The Knowledge of Head Teachers

Santhakumar (2017) advocates that consistent endeavours are required to bring reforms to the school to make it more productive. This objective can be achieved by enhancing the capacity building of school heads as educational leaders to get good results. For this purpose, the areas of professional development, academic development, student achievement, planning and instructional leadership should be focused on for heads' capacity building. Sarma (2019) argues that policies came into existence for the betterment of education but the desired results have not been achieved and it demands the capacity building of the headteachers of the schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate the effectiveness of SLDP on the administrative performance of secondary school heads.
2. Examine the effectiveness of SLDP on the professional development of secondary school heads.

Research Design

The study was qualitative in nature. The population of this study comprised all the heads of secondary schools in Pakpattan. Thus, all the headteachers of male and female public schools were selected as a sample from each selected tehsil. For the purpose of qualitative data collection, ten senior teachers of secondary schools who were acting as the vice of the

heads were taken as the sample for a structured interview.

Interview

For the qualitative aspect of the research, the researcher used a self-prepared interview as the instrument for data collection. It consisted of the same two main disciplines of Administrative Performance and Professional Development. Every discipline carried four further subsections and each subsection carried at least two questions. The interview was applied to the senior-most secondary school teachers in the school working as the vice of the head of the school.

Data Collection

The researcher collected the desired data from the heads of all secondary schools in district Pakpattan. Similarly, the interview was personally conducted with the targeted teachers. The data was collected with the prior approval of concerned authorities.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data through interviews:

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative analysis has been described in the followings.

All ten participants agreed that the funds of the school (NSB, FTF) are utilized under rules for school improvement. They all agreed too that the school record is maintained by the head of the school. Except for P-6, all the participants agreed that the examinations are conducted as per schedule in the school. However, P-6 commented that to some extent exams are conducted as per schedule in his school. But he agreed with the head's response. Further, only P-9 agreed that feedback on the papers is given to parents in his school. P-1, P-4, P-5, P-7 and P-10 said that feedback on the papers is not given to parents in their schools. However, P-2, P-3, P-6 and P-7 argued that to some extent, the feedback is given to parents in

their schools. P-6 did not agree with the head's response who had agreed with the statement. Moreover, all the participants said that all the teachers are monitored by the head of class teaching but P-9 said that to some extent, the teachers are monitored by the head of class teaching. All the participants agreed that the classroom environment is conducive in school but P-6 said that to some extent, the classroom environment is conducive while P-10 disagreed with the statement. Moreover, all the participants commented that the head of the school focuses on child care but except P-6, P-9 and P-10 responded that to some extent, their heads focus on child care. Except for P-10, all the participants said that their heads follow the leave rules. However, P-10 argued that to some extent, his head follows the leave rules. Further, they all agreed that the head carries out disciplinary action against the lawbreakers but P-5 and P-10 disagreed with the statement. However, P-8 while contradicting his head's response, argued that to some extent, his head carries out the disciplinary action against the lawbreakers. Unanimously all the participants commented that the head respects the opinions of the majority of teachers. They all further said that the head focuses on the issues of staff members. All the participants said that the head makes the right decision at right time. They all added that it is right to say that the head solves every problem skillfully. All the participants commented that they easily understand what their heads say to them. Further, they all said that the staff is motivated by their heads. However, only P-3, P-6, P-7 and P-10 said that the head of their school uses a computer for office management whereas, P-2, P-4, P-5, P-8 and P-9 disagreed with the statement but P-1 argued that to some extent, the head uses the computer for office management.

Unanimously, all the participants remarked that every task is achieved through teamwork at school. They all added that the head of the school can manage the behaviour of the staff members but P-4 disagreed with the statement. However, P-2 and P-3 both argued that to some extent, the head can manage the behaviour of the staff members. Here, P-3 disagreed with the head's response.

Discussion

This section presents a brief discussion of research findings following the contemporary research in the field of educational and school leadership development. The results were discussed in the light of the literature review for the current study along with results of the previous relevant research studies in the area. The current study explored the effect of the School Leadership Development Program on the performance of secondary school heads. The result of the impact analysis generally supported the effectiveness of the School Leadership Development Program on the performance of secondary school heads. There was a positive effect of the leadership program specifically designed and organized for the development of headteachers in secondary schools in Punjab. As it has been noticed before, the researchers had reported bit similar findings to the current study, a positive relationship between administrative performance and professional development.

The current study found that all the participants through questionnaires and interviews accepted the positive impact on the performance of the secondary school heads. They agreed that subordinates were consulted in decision making through effective communication. This finding was in accordance with the results of Odhiambo (2018); Siddiqui (2019); Islam (2019) and Sarma (2019) who found the positive impact of educational leadership in the domains of organizational issues, physical facilities, students' care, effective communication, consultation in creative work and decision making, assigning responsibilities to the right persons and capacity building of the staff members. Moreover, the current study found that there was no significant difference between male and female heads regarding professional development. Similarly, there was no significant difference among heads, on the basis of qualification, designation and experience. It was supported by Santhakumar (2017), Nisar (2020) and Mythili (2019) as they had indicated that the gender of the headteacher might not be a significant

determinant in terms of professional awareness.

The current study revealed that the School Leadership Development Program helped the headteachers of public secondary schools to monitor the teachers' lessons in the classrooms through instructional supervision and get the work done through staff motivation. It was supported by the findings of Michael (2017); Ngole (2021); Tobias (2019); Mwesiga & Okendo (2018); Manaseh (2016); Mpungu (2018); Mulunda (2016); Wyatt (2017); Ekaette (2016) and David (2021).

The School Leadership Development Program left a positive effect on time management and review of decisions. It showed the association with the findings of Lilijenberg (2021) and Cambell (2017). The findings regarding task achievement through teamwork made the promising affiliation with the results of Islam (2019) who found that educational leaders believe in teamwork. The current study revealed the result that the majority of the heads used the democratic approach and visionary style and it was in line with the results of Islam (2019) and Alimin

(2018) regarding the extent of the democratic approach. However, it was aligned with the findings of Martin, Hemphil, Ankel, Heron, Sentern and Merrvitt (2018) as they were of the view that educational leaders developed a clear vision that takes them to the right destination.

Recommendations

Keeping the extracted findings of the research in view, the following recommendations are given:

1. More training sessions may be organized for female headteachers to make up for the discrepancies in the domain of administrative performance.
2. More training sessions may be scheduled for headteachers of secondary schools in the rural locality to cover the deficiencies in both administrative and professional domains.
3. The content of SLDP may compulsorily be included in all the induction level pieces of training of the headteachers of the schools.

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