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Educational Leadership Processes as Predictors of Positive Work Attitude at Higher Education Level

Abstract *This study aimed at exploring the impact of educational leadership processes such as goal setting, strategic resourcing, curriculum quality, quality of teaching, promoting teaching-learning, and a safe environment on positive work attitudes at the higher education level. Positive work attitudes were delimited to job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment. A descriptive survey research design was used to collect quantitative data through two questionnaires; educational leadership practices questionnaire and positive work attitude scale. Results indicated that a positive correlation exists between two research variables. Simple linear regression analysis reflected that the highest Beta coefficients exist between goal setting and positive work attitude. It was concluded that in a sphere of mutual honor, trust, and allegiance between superiors and subordinates the work attitudes strongly correlate positively. It is recommended open door policy, consultative practices among educational leadership, and training for employee empowerment may be adopted to increase organizational productivity.*

Key Words: Goal Setting, Job Involvement, Organizational Commitment, Positive Work Attitude, Strategic Resourcing

Introduction

Variability is a key concept in task performance in organizations through which managers can devise ways that would assist them in the accomplishment of tasks. Organizational variables such as communication, decision making, and leadership process are determiners for variability in task performances. The organizational variability affects employee variables such as employees' attitude, commitment, job satisfaction, and trust which affects the quality of performance of an organization (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). It is evident from the theories of organizational management that variation in educational leadership processes has either a negative or positive impact on employee behavior and performance (Hallinger, 2013). Participatory leadership processes have positive whereas non-participatory educational leadership processes leave a negative impact on employee-related variables. Educational institutes are considered as a social structure in which nomothetic aspects and ideographic characters collaborate to generate organizational results. Needs and personality features of organizational members can be characterized as ideographic facets and the role of expectations of the organization regarding their members can be characterized as nomothetic facets. The balance between these two in an organization is measured as its efficiency (Getzel & Guba, 1957; Hallinger & Lu, 2014).

The educational leadership process attributes to the social effect where a leader or manager facilitates his faculty members by giving direction and aid for the attainment of pre-determined organizational/university objectives. Autocratic or democratic natures of leadership are the two extremes suggested by management theorists. Autocratic way of leadership implies hostility towards employees which results in negativity in employee's behavioral aspects while the democratic way of Conduction allows a leader to trust as well as believe his employees consequently increasing productivity and effectiveness in organizations (McCaffery, 2018). These two educational leadership styles can easily be manifested through processes such as strategic resourcing, goal setting, quality of

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teaching and curriculum, promoting teacher development, and maintaining a non-threatening workplace environment. If these processes are carried out under the umbrella of democratic/participatory leadership, positive employee attitude is the resultant and if the leadership believes in autocratic style, results are vice versa ([Kwan, 2011](#)).

Goal setting refers to the role of educational leadership in incorporating guiding frameworks and targets to be achieved through the faculty members. Goal-setting becomes an ongoing process as one after the other targets are achieved considering from daily to an annual basis. Educational leadership sets priorities in teaching and learning which is reflected in the departmental and faculty time table. Teaching resources and their timely availability to concerned teachers also comes under the domain of strategic resourcing, thus contributing towards a major leadership process ([Kamal, Samdani & Yameen, 2018](#)). Curriculum quality is ensured by educational leaders through continuous monitoring of students' academic progress and assessment plans. To assess the quality of teaching is a major process and its utmost responsibility of educational leaders to help and provide opportunities to teachers to get training and develop their skills. Similarly, educational leadership has to provide forums for open discussion among faculty members so that professional learning is facilitated. Lastly, maintaining a safe and orderly work environment is the ultimate responsibility of educational leaders. All the other processes fail to proceed and flourish in the absence of a safe, secure, and organized environment in the institution ([Wylie & Hodgen, 2010](#)).

The attitude of an employee is an outcome of his/her feelings and behavior towards the workplace environment. Employee behavior is the resultant of attitude towards colleagues, superiors, and the organization as a whole. The leadership styles and processes including the work environment cause the positivity or negativity in employee attitude. Positive work attitude enhances the work efficiency, involvement, and job satisfaction of the employee as well as a profound interest in task performance whereas inefficiency in work, low involvement, high absenteeism, turnover intentions, and lack of interest depicts the negative behavior of an employee. Employees manifest commitment and ownership towards organizational decisions if their involvement in the decision-making process is made mandatory but show less interest in the routine tasks and lack responsibility in an authoritative fashion ([Saari, Philip & Judge, 2004](#)).

The employee shows full commitment in a scenario where organizational goals become aligned with the personal goals of employees. This also works as a psychological state and bounds the people completely with their workplace. Researchers propose that organizational commitment can be manifested as an affective commitment that involves an employee's interest, participation, interest, and psychological bonding with the respective organization. Or as normative commitment provides a commitment to remain part of the respective organizations due to some reasons for attachment. Lastly, continuance commitment deals with such conditions where employees know the benefits of serving the respective organization ([Meyer et al, 2002](#)).

Workplace bond between faculty and educational leadership is supported by employee trust, which further promotes confidence thus enabling employee's mindfulness to believe that their requirements will be fully served if they trust their managers. If the employees have a firm belief that their issues will be addressed properly by their leaders and their interests will also be safeguarded by higher authorities, this exhibits organizational trust. Dirks et al, 2001; McEvily et al, 2003 & Fracarò, 2008 recommend that confidence, loyalty, and integrity only occur between employees and their seniors when a bond of trust is established between them, which ultimately creates a healthy environment through which organizational aims can be achieved. Trust and confidence go hand in hand in an organizational environment. If the employees have trust in their leaders, they will be confident that their interests will not be harmed. Leaders on the other hand will empower the employees to become an active part of decision-making processes ([Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016](#)).

Literature Review

Authoritative leadership processes control the environment of the organization through coercion,

enforcement of regulations, and strictness over sub-ordinates, this then subdues the creativity of the employee. This boss-oriented leadership conducts the goal setting and reinforcing alone which affects the productivity of the employee in a negative sense and develops an uncooperative attitude towards the leadership. Democratic leadership processes encompass the consultation and involvement in organizational processes, which motivates and enhances the capacity and creativity of the employees when they are consulted by leaders in organizational matters related to them specifically. Democratic leaders promote and persuade creativity and innovation under their leadership consequently the employee shows a sense of ownership regarding the organization. Under the umbrella of democratic leadership, all sectors show improved attributes such as better cooperation, enhanced involvement, and increased workplace satisfaction which are leading characteristics of positive employee attitude (Bass, 1990; Wood & Wallace, 2004; [Aurangzeb, 2016](#)).

According to previous literature, performing daily organizational tasks is based on command and directions of educational leadership which is the backbone of any organization. Task-oriented orders and downward communications are the primary focus of autocratically structured organizations whereas free flux of communication shows the democratic structure in the organization. Researchers have also concluded that autocratic organizations are mechanistic with low productivity whereas democratic organizations yield high performance and productivity. Democratic organizations comprising of participative educational leadership include conviction, cooperation, freedom, and correspondence between all segments. This causes belongingness, job involvement, and job satisfaction among employees, reliance regarding management, and making misinformation non-existent ([Cheney, 2011](#); [Law et al., 2014](#)).

From an employee perspective, this era has seen changes in organizational structure and also extremely changed view regarding educational leadership as well. Researchers have found the existence of positive linkage among employee attitude, like commitment, involvement, and satisfaction towards the job, and democratic leadership processes (Ho, 2010; [Kantabutra, 2015](#); [Yousef, 2017](#)) Satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the job is directly linked with the attitude of an employee. Absenteeism, lack of interest, and turnover are regarded as the negative attitude of employee and adherence, commitment towards work, and keenness in organizational dealings is regarded as a positive employee attitude in many types of research. Some previous researches have highlighted that participation at all managerial segments has a direct impact on negativity or positivity in employee attitude. Similarly, Mester (2003) and [Khattak et al \(2013\)](#) have recommended that engagement and disengagement of employees is the manifestation of employee attitude such as heightened motivation and satisfaction regarding the job, commitment towards organization gets enhanced. Lastly, job affairs such as job involvement and job satisfaction get better.

Earlier researches pointed out that employee commitment is a prominent example of leadership processes in the organization. Keskes (2014) suggested a strong linkage between positive employee attitude and leadership processes. He then further elaborated that the supportive attitude of leaders such as empowering employees, the open flux of organizational decision making, and participatory communication processes are the reasons behind employee commitment at an organizational level. Another aspect of strong organizational commitment relates to the positive work environment. It means that in addition to leadership processes, the work environment plays a vital role in job commitment and involvement ([Hashim, Khan & Adnan, 2019](#)). The more encouraging the work environment is, the stronger commitment towards the job is ([Hanaysha, 2016](#)). Outcomes and antecedents of participatory educational leadership processes include increased job involvement and organizational commitment. If the leadership processes include safe working conditions, opportunities for training and development, and participatory decision making, psychological contract with the organization from an employee's perspective increases ([Yahaya & Ebrahim 2016](#)).

Educational leaders tend to create a climate of cooperation, respect, and trust between their subordinates. Various research works concluded that employee trust highlights the Acknowledging and cooperative personality of leadership in any organization. Employee satisfaction towards a job is positively interrelated with employee trust. If employees have faith that their work will be assessed with

absolute fairness by their leaders it ultimately enhances the employees' satisfaction towards the job and impact positively on organization's productivity as well as employees (Leonard 2007; Atkins 2009; [Drucker, 2009](#); Dubrin, 2013; [Seng & Claire McDonald, 2017](#)). It is also an admitted fact that those employees who are committed to their organizations are more possibly better and longer contributors towards organizational productivity. Positivity in the work environment is the resultant of all leadership processes prevailing in the organization ([Pentareddy & Suganthi, 2015](#)). Empowering work environments in educational institutions focus on teacher training and development, quality of the curriculum, and participatory goal setting. If people are involved in decision making, they own the decisions thus creating a positive work environment. The positive work environment is ensured through positive work attitudes such as job satisfaction, job commitment, and involvement ([Balkar, 2015](#)).

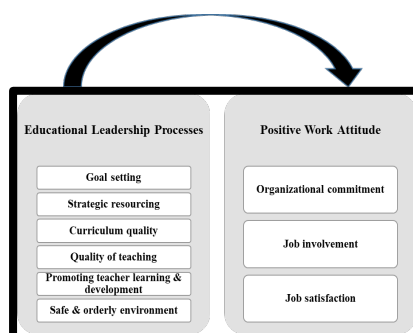
Statement of the problem

In the theoretical framework, educational leadership serves a pivotal role in organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job involvement. Conger, 1992 gave an argument that a person who uses motivational tactics to achieve pre-decided organizational goals after giving a proper direction to the group and then gaining allegiance and commitment from its sub-ordinates towards that direction can be designated as an educational leader. With this, it can be presumed that leaders' tactics to use social impact to achieve the organizational aims can be counted in leadership processes. These processes can be manifested either in an authoritative or democratic leadership style. The change in leadership processes can have negative or positive impacts on the organizational processes ([Mentop et al, 2011](#)). So, it is justified to explore the impact of educational leadership processes to see their impact on a positive work attitude. This study aimed at investigating the impact of goal setting, strategic resourcing, curriculum quality, quality of teaching, promoting teacher learning and development, safe and orderly environment as educational leadership predictors for observing positive work attitude.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study may help educational leaders, managers, and planners improve the organizational processes so that their subordinates manifest a positive and committed work attitude. Also, policy formulation, knowledge development, and practical improvement can be made at higher education level as this study highlights the contribution value of educational leadership processes towards positive employee work attitude. This will go a long way in competence building and improving institutional performance as well as productivity.

Conceptual framework



Objectives

1. Examining the impact of educational leadership processes on a positive work attitude at the university level.

- 1a. Investigating the relationship between educational leadership processes on organizational commitment at the university level.
- 2a. Exploring the relationship between educational leadership processes on job involvement at the university level.
- 3a. Studying the relationship between educational leadership processes on job satisfaction at the university level.

Null Hypotheses

- H₀₁ No substantial impact of goal setting exists on a positive work attitude at the university level.
- H₀₂ No substantial impact of strategic resourcing is existent on a positive work attitude at the higher education level.
- H₀₃ No considerable impact of curriculum quality on a positive work attitude is found at the university level.
- H₀₄ No extensive impact of the quality of teaching on a positive work attitude exists at the university level.
- H₀₅ No imperative impact of promoting teacher learning & development exists on a positive work attitude at the university level.
- H₀₆ No considerable impact of a safe and orderly environment on a positive work attitude is found at the university level.

Research Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted to collect quantitative data through two questionnaires. The population comprised of two strata; strata one was deans/head of departments as educational leaders and strata two was teaching faculty serving in all public sector universities of Islamabad. Random sampling was applied to select the respondents of this study.

Sample

Participants of this study were deans/heads of departments (educational leaders) and teaching faculty of public sector universities situated in Islamabad. Two samples were drawn from four public sector universities, namely HoDs/deans serving in the capacity of educational leaders and all teaching faculty working under them or reporting directly to these educational leaders. The sample size included 80 educational leaders and 250 teaching faculty working under their span of command.

Measuring instruments

a) Educational Leadership Practices Questionnaire

This questionnaire was based on the Kiwi Leadership for Principals framework having six dimensions namely goal setting, strategic resourcing, curriculum quality, quality of teaching, promoting teacher learning and development, and a safe/orderly environment. This instrument consists of 30 items and yields Cronbach's Alpha at $r=.87$.

b) Positive work attitude scale

Positive employee attitude scale was a self-constructed 5-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of three subscales namely; organizational commitment (based on a three-dimensional Meyer, Allen & Smith 1993 instrument), job involvement (based on the instrument by Kanungo, 1982) and job satisfaction (based on Job in General Scale by Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson and Paul, 1989). This instrument consists of 35 statements and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha at $r=.89$.

Results

Table 1. Correlation Matrix of educational leadership processes with positive work attitude

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Goal setting	1								
Strategic resourcing	.69*	1							
Curriculum quality	.72*	.79*	1						
Quality of teaching	.69*	.68*	.82*	1					
Promoting teacher learning & development	.74*	.74*	.80*	.80*	1				
Safe/orderly environment	.63*	.65*	.71*	.64*	.68*	1			
Organizational commitment	.89*	.63*	.77*	.72*	.78*	.83*	1		
Job involvement	.79*	.79*	.69*	.69*	.74*	.77*	.75*	1	
Job satisfaction	.78*	.69*	.67*	.68*	.71*	.75*	.81*	.77*	1

*. Correlation significance level=0.05 level (2-tailed)

Correlation milieu indicated that goal setting has a maximum positive association with organizational commitment ($r=.89^*$), strategic resourcing was correlated highly with curriculum quality ($r=.79^*$), curriculum quality depicted strongest positive correlation with the quality of teaching ($r=.82^*$), promoting Teacher learning reflected its strong positive correlation with organizational commitment ($r=.78^*$), whereas last but not the least organizational commitment and job satisfaction indicated a strong positive correlation at $r=.81^*$ at 0.05 levels.

Table 2. Simple linear regression analysis of predictor and outcome variable

Model 1 (Constant)	Coefficients (Unstandardized)		Coefficients(Standardized)	t	R ²	F	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
	204.671	71.442		8.574	.792	135.32	.000
Goal Setting	15.434	4.067	.892	10.960			.001
Model 2							
Strategic resourcing	198.764	56.324	.763	6.089	.791	117.43	.002
	12.342	3.450		8.765			.001
Model 3							
Curriculum Quality	215.572	66.229	.792	5.563	.802	108.91	.000
	16.589	4.678		6.347			.001
Model 4							

	222.413	67.517	.744	5.761	.811	124.67	.000
Quality of teaching	19.466	4.705		6.821			.001
Model 5							
Teacher Learning & Development	211.311	64.275	.753	8.032	.804	130.09	.001
	14.487	4.611		6.445			.001
Model 6							
Safe & Orderly Environment	178.764	66.113	.722	6.531	.801	125.82	.000
	11.142	5.187		7.782			.000

Dependent variable: Positive employee attitude

A simple linear regression analysis was carried out to check the impact of six educational leadership processes on employee attitude. Significant regression equations were found in all the six models. Model 1 reflected that one unit increase in goal setting, increases positive work attitude by 15 units, with R^2 at .792, where p value was significant at .000 levels. Model 2 indicates that one unit increase in strategic resourcing increases the dependant variable by 12 units, where R^2 is .791, at $p=.002$ level of significance. Model 3 shows that a unit increase in curriculum quality as one of the variables of educational leadership processes increase the dependant variable by 16 unit with $R^2=.802$, at $p=.000$. Model 4 indicates that one unit increase in the quality of teaching increases positive work attitude by 19 units. This model is also very significant at $R^2= .811$, $\beta=.744$ at $p=.000$ levels. Model 5 reflects that if one unit of teacher learning is increased, it increases positive work attitude by 14 units where $R^2=.804$, $\beta=.753$ at $p=.001$ levels. Lastly, Model 6 indicates that one unit increase in a safe and orderly environment increases the dependant variable by 11 units at $R^2= .801$, $\beta=.722$ at $p=.001$ level of significance. The results of these 6 linear regression models have rejected all the null hypotheses of the study, thus indicating that a strong positive impact of educational leadership processes exists on a positive work attitude. All the six models are statistically significant with standardized Beta coefficients above .70, Adjusted R Square above .75, and levels of significance below 05.

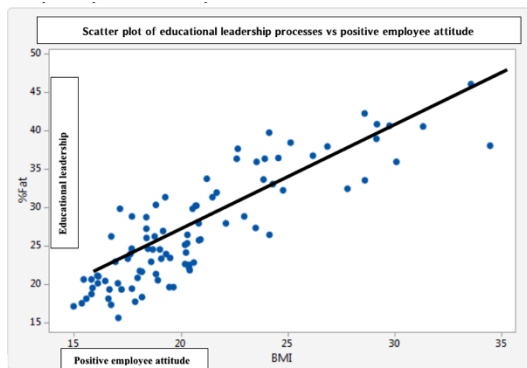


Diagram 1. Scatter plot of predictor and dependent variable

Scatter plot shows that a strong positive rectilinear association exists between educational Leadership processes and positive employee attitude. It also indicates that all the null hypotheses are considered rejected.

Discussion

Effective educational leadership requires the team leaders to have a positive work attitude because the team is a mirror of a leader's attitude. Similarly, a positive work attitude is a form of social reality and

is concerned with job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment ([George, 2015](#)). As the verdicts of this research work show that educational leadership processes have a strong positive correlation and impact on the work attitude of employees, many types of research have also concluded this. [Chaskalson, 2011](#); [Bello, 2012](#) and [Iqbal, 2012](#) have reflected that involvement in goal setting and strategic resourcing helps the employees feel empowered at the workplace. Especially transformational educational leaders set more specific and challenging goals for their employees and reduce the perception of procedural constraints among them by providing timely guidance ([Bronkhorst, Steijn, & Vermeeren, 2015](#)). This feeling of empowerment goes a long way in developing positive work attitudes and job satisfaction. The vital finding of this study states a high positive correlation between involvement in goal setting processes and positive work attitude. [Huang and Luthans \(2015\)](#) have also suggested that a participatory goal-setting organizational process helps in building creative and positive work attitudes among employees. In addition to this, [Bouckenooghe, Zafar & Raja \(2015\)](#) have also concluded that a mediating effect exists between leadership processes and employees' in-role job performance. As the findings suggest, curriculum quality is also linked with leadership processes. The more leadership involves the lower levels in improving curriculum quality, the more will be job satisfaction and sense of ownership ([Vaillant, 2015](#)).

Negative linkage is visible between employee attitude and leadership processes which bring us to the conclusion that a centralized process of goal setting is unacceptable for the employees in an organization. In educational organizations, employees trust through opening venues for training and development and providing a safe and orderly environment ([Long, Perumal, and Ajagbe, 2012](#)). The efficiency and effectiveness of educational organizations are manifested through their products. For better outputs, we have to keep in view the inputs of the educational process. Some of the inputs include curriculum quality and quality of teaching ([Verma, 2012](#)). Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and involvement always regress positively towards leadership processes when employees are given confidence and trust are thrust upon them. Educational leadership processes show a high positive correlation with positive work attitudes when employee participation is increased at all managerial levels ([Ghani, Masood & Rehman, 2018](#)).

Conclusion

Determination towards the development of organization and employees' effectiveness causes the educational leaders to be more cooperative and democratic. When ideas, if good enough, that originally came from the employee are used, the employee feels confident and motivated. It is accepted the fact that in the better-performing organizations, the educational leadership fosters a sense of cooperation, trust, confidence, and loyalty between members. Educational leadership processes play a significant role in developing a team spirit and group work between organizational members. In pursuit of gaining employee trust leaders adopts a more democratic approach in organizations. In a sphere of mutual honor, trust, and allegiance between superiors and subordinates the organizational and employee-related work attitudes strongly correlate positively.

Recommendations

1. Open door policy among educational leaders may lead to more positive work attitudes because every employee feels inclusive.
2. The adoption of consultative educational leadership processes assists in a shift from job dissatisfaction to job satisfaction and involvement.
3. To develop a trustful bond, educational leaders may utilize daily employee feedback regarding decisions.
4. Employees may also be motivated by encouraging them and providing them with immediate acknowledgment and appreciation. It may help in developing strong organizational commitment.

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