Effects of Leadership on School Performance: Comparison between Perceptions of Teachers and Head Teachers of Special and Regular Schools

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Abstract   *This study compared the perception(s) of teachers and headteachers working in special schools and those in regular schools about the effect of leadership on the performance of the school. The sample included 100 teachers and 50 headteachers from each of the school categories in Karachi city. The analysis of data was carried out by using descriptive statistics and Independent Samples t-test. The results revealed that teachers and headteachers perceived leadership style to be affecting the performance of the school. The headteachers and teachers from regular schools and teachers from special schools scored highest on their response(s) demonstrating that headteachers anticipated the role teachers working under their leadership in inculcating knowledge, skills, and attitudes among students; whereas, the score of the responses of the headteachers of special schools appeared to be highest indicating that they guide their teachers how to attain the goals of their school(s).*

Key Words
Head teacher, leadership, school performance

Introduction

Leadership is a dynamic process to achieve the goals with the partnership and promise of group members (Cole, 2002). According to Balunywa (2000), these goals need reinforcements like recognition, morale building, conditions of service, and remuneration. Leadership assumes an active role in enhancing the performance of schools. Even if a school has sufficient human, materials and financial resources, it cannot perform effectively without proper supervision and guidance of students and staff. Here comes the role, influence and authority of the school's headteacher as a leader. Armstrong (2001) highlighted the role of a leader to provide direction to human resources to accomplish the desired goals. The leader also needs to share the vision of the school and how to achieve its goals (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003). Qureshi (2006) stated that educational leaders must have the capability to achieve a high level of performance through effective management and inspiration.

Leadership raises the efficiency and ability of management and performance by utilizing and managing resources (Reed, 2005). Maicibi (2003) also supports this view through the observation of good leadership for active performance in organizations. Another view is that *"Scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal and in a failing school you will find weak leadership"* (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p.64). An effective leader promotes a culture and environment which is conducive to working which is considered useful for the success of an organization (Schein, 2004).

A study by Nawab (2011) reveals that the private schools' principal in rural areas of Pakistan accepts that teachers should follow regular planning, for collaborative teaching and complete participation of the students in the learning processes. Many researchers emphasized the motivation of teachers by school heads for a successful educational system (Din & Inamullah, 2008; Pamela, 2005).

Stuart and Philip (1996) suggested five ways to promote leadership in schools including; encourage talented people to become leaders, training of future leaders, selecting the best candidates available by providing organized induction programs for newcomers, and providing opportunities for the professional growth of leaders.

The current study was intended to investigate the comparison among the perception of teachers and headteachers working in special schools and the perception of teachers and headteachers working in regular schools about the effect of headteachers' on the performance of a school. The results can

help establish the criteria for the selection of headteachers, designing professional development programs for the leadership at school level and in designing job description and performance appraisal for headteachers.

Review of Literature

Generally, educational leadership is considered as an important tool for enhancing the performance of school(s). Educational and/ or instructional leadership has to play different roles including coordinating, controlling & supervising the school's activities along with developing and implementing curricula and designing instruction (Hallinger, 2003) or instructional strategies. In educational institutions particularly, in schools, the bureaucratic style of leadership provides instructions on performing tasks for achieving the desired or anticipated results and/ or goals (Sergiovanni, 1998). Visionary leadership envisions the school performance through the inspiration for a change in school (Bush & Glover, 2003) culture and environment. The transformational style of leadership emphasizes on "transforming" the team members to assist each other and contribute to the organization completely (Memon, 1999).

A concept of leadership style is an extension of understanding leadership behaviors and it is important to study leadership styles because of its importance for the success of any institution (Subramaniam, 2011). In an Autocratic or authoritarian style, the leader is assertive and makes all the decisions (Dinham, 2005: 352) whereas in democratic or participative style the team members participate in decision-making (Adeyemi, 2007). The laissez-faire or free-rein style abdicates the responsibility to lead that is there is a lack of leadership (Hood, 2003).

There are various research studies conducted in Pakistan about the school leadership e.g., Khaki and Safdar (2010) argued about the ability and skills of headteachers whereas Shafa (2010) highlighted continuous support of management to headteachers. Simkins, Sisum and Memon (2003) talked about the hierarchical system and Memon and Bana (2005) shed light on leadership styles.

Different qualities and characteristics of appearing to be associated with educational leaders including effective teaching and learning (Ofsted, 2008) which seems to be an important factor of the school's success, besides having knowledge of adult development and awareness about the theories and research on teaching and learning (Sherrill, 1999) process.

Matthews (2007) in a study presented the perception of staff about the qualities and characteristics of educational leaders including having vision, coaching and encouraging initiative, motivating, rewarding and valuing staff, effective communicator, role model, building teams and empowering them, involving community in school affairs, supporting professional development, innovative and enthusiastic, decision making through consultation, and quality conscious in every action and task.

DiRanna and Loucks-Horsley (2001) mentioned the ability in organization design, public relations and knowledge about change theory, as the important role of school leaders. Lambert (2005) noted teachers assuming more responsibility for school effectiveness, McMahon (2001) argued about creating a supportive climate and Collinson and Cook (2003) talked about innovation under effective leadership. The reciprocal relationship of principals with teachers (Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001), sharing knowledge and capacity building of teachers for their motivation are some other aspects of effective leadership to improve the performance of their teachers (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001).

Research Methodology

This was exploratory research of quantitative nature. The investigator interviewed the headteachers and teachers of selected special and regular schools. For the analysis of data, Mean, Standard Deviation and Independent Samples, t-tests were used at 0.05 significance level.

Population and sample

The population of this study included headteachers, and teachers of regular and special schools located in three regions i.e. central, east and s o u t h regions of Karachi. Out of 25 special schools, 09 special schools from District East Karachi, 02 special schools from District Central Karachi and 14 special schools from District South Karachi were selected through purposive sampling. Out of 50 regular schools, 19 regular schools from District East Karachi, 08 regular schools from District Central Karachi and 23 regular schools from District South Karachi were selected through purposive sampling.

One special school of Federal Government, 01special school of Provincial Government, 09 special schools administered by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and 14 special schools from the private sector were selected through purposive sampling. Three regular schools of Federal Government, 07 regular schools of

Provincial Government, 13 regular schools administered by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and 27 regular schools from the private sector were selected through purposive sampling.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

The sample of this study included 100 headteachers selected through convenient sampling, 50 were selected from special schools and 50 were selected from regular schools located in Karachi city. Out of 50 headteachers from special schools, seven were male and 43 were female. Out of 50 headteachers from regular schools, 13 were male and 37 were female. There was no gender discrimination in the selection of the sample, but it reflects that a high proportion of females as compared to males was serving in schools. Most of the headteachers from special schools were 40 to 49 years old; whereas, most of the headteachers from regular schools were 30 to 39 years old. Likewise, a large number of headteachers from both categories of the schools were post-graduate in qualification. The highest qualification of most of the headteachers from special schools was Masters's degree in special education; whereas, mostly, the headteachers in regular schools had no professional qualification. Most of the headteachers in special schools were designated as principals, whereas in regular schools all headteachers were designated as principal. The working experience of most of the headteachers in special schools and from regular schools was more than 11 years. Mostly, the headteachers from both types of schools had tenure of 13 years as the headship of their present school.

The sample of this study also included 200 teachers, selected through convenient sampling; 100 each, from the same special schools and regular schools from which the headteachers were selected. Out of 100 teachers from special schools, 06 were male and 94 were female. There was no gender discrimination in the selection of the sample, but it reflects that a high proportion of females as compared to males was serving in special schools. Out of 100 teachers from regular schools, 32 were male and 68 were female. This again reflects the high proportion of females as compared to males was serving in regular schools. Most of the teachers from special schools were 30 to 39 years old whereas most of the teachers from regular schools were below 30 years age. Qualification wise, most of the teachers from special schools were post-graduate; whereas, most of the teachers from regular schools were graduates. Most of the teachers in both types of schools had no professional qualifications. Most of the teachers both in special schools as well as in regular schools were class teachers. The working experience of most of the teachers in special schools and from regular schools was 8- 11 years.

The Instrument of the Study

This study used two closed-ended, structured questionnaires based on literature review and opinion of experts in the field. The questionnaire for the headteachers and questionnaire for the teachers both having 14 items reflect the parameters of the effect of the leadership of headteachers on the performance of the school.

Reliability Analysis

The Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of the instrument calculated through the *"Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)"* was 0.827, which shows that the instrument was very much reliable.

Results and Interpretation

The results of the study are based on the following research questions to demonstrate the effect of headteachers' leadership on the performance of the school.

Research Question 1

What was the effect of the leadership of headteachers on the performance of special and regular schools (as perceived by headteachers and teachers from these schools)?

The 14 items reflect the effect(s) of headteachers' leadership on the performance of the school. For the analysis of this question, Mean and Standard Deviation of each item was calculated. Independent samples t-test was used to find out if there was any significant difference between each response about the effect(s) of headteachers' leadership on the performance of schools. In table 1, the value of "t" and "p" at 0.05 level of significance for items 01- 14 indicates that all respondents from regular and special schools agree with the statements about the effect of leadership on school performance and overall there was no significant difference in the opinion of respondents from special schools and regular schools about having the effect of leadership of headteacher on the performance of school. However, table 1 shows that both of the groups of headteachers and teachers of regular schools and headteachers and teachers of special schools scored highest on their response "The headteacher expects teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of student in sequence"(mean 4.53, SD 0.501 & mean 4.52, SD 0.501

respectively). The least score by headteachers and teachers of special schools was in domain "The headteacher confirms that the school vision statement is reviewed" (mean 3.54, SD 1.403) whereas the least score by headteachers and teachers of regular schools was in domain "The headteacher informs teachers about the vision of the school"(mean 3.45, SD 1.468).

Table 1. The effect of the leadership of headteacher on the performance of the school as perceived by headteachers and teachers from special schools and regular schools (N= 300)

Item	Responses The Headteacher:	School	Mean	SD	t	p
1.	Observes classroom to check teachers' work	Sp.*	3.87	1.241	1.632	0.104
		Reg.**	3.62	1.374		
2.	Needs teachers to write lesson plan with learning outcomes	Sp.*	3.91	1.228	1.740	0.083
		Reg.**	3.65	1.357		
3.	Expects teachers to develop "knowledge, skills and attitudes among students"	Sp.*	4.52	0.501	-.115	0.908
		Reg.**	4.53	0.501		
4.	Is "sensitive to the needs of teachers, student, and the community"	Sp.*	4.46	0.539	-.111	0.912
		Reg.**	4.47	0.501		
5.	Believes that the academic performance of student dependents on the leadership	Sp.*	4.41	0.761	.225	0.822
		Reg.**	4.39	0.776		
6.	Supports for change within the school	Sp.*	4.29	0.832	1.116	0.266
		Reg.**	4.17	1.022		
7.	Rationalizes the school's instructional program based on theories of learning	Sp.*	4.48	0.540	.214	0.831
		Reg.**	4.47	0.539		
8.	Clearly explains to others his/her practice of values within the school	Sp.*	4.31	0.883	.193	0.847
		Reg.**	4.29	0.909		
9.	Informs teachers about the vision of the school	Sp.*	3.59	1.400	.885	0.377
		Reg.**	3.45	1.468		
10.	Confirms that the school vision statement is reviewed	Sp.*	3.54	1.403	.403	0.687
		Reg.**	3.47	1.459		
11.	Explains teachers to work for attaining the school's goals	Sp.*	4.46	0.500	.863	0.389
		Reg.**	4.41	0.569		
12.	Articulates the belief that school can improve students' life	Sp.*	4.44	0.573	.584	0.560
		Reg.**	4.40	0.613		
13.	Gives high importance to the role of education for the improvement of society	Sp.*	4.50	0.502	.230	0.818
		Reg.**	4.49	0.502		
14.	Believes that teachers' retention is dependent on the job satisfaction & influence of the school	Sp.*	4.09	1.105	.000	1.000
		Reg.**	4.09	1.117		

Special*, Regular**
Special schools' Composite Mean 4.205, (*SD*) 0.858
Regular schools' Composite Mean 4.136, (*SD*) 0.908

Research Question 2

Was there any difference between the perception of teachers and headteachers working in special schools about the effect of the leadership of special schools' headteachers on the performance of special schools?

Table 2 shows that the headteachers of special schools scored highest on their response "The headteacher explains teachers to work for attaining the school's goals" (mean 4.66) followed by the response "The headteacher expects teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the student in sequence" (mean 4.52). Contrary to this, the teachers of special schools scored highest on a response "The headteacher expects teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of student in sequence" (mean 4.52) followed by the response "The headteacher gives high importance to the role of education for improvement of society" (mean 4.50).

The least score by headteachers of special schools was in the domain "The headteacher observes classroom to check teachers' work" (mean 3.90) whereas teachers of special schools gave the lowest score to the response that "The headteacher confirms that the school vision statement is reviewed" (mean 3.35). Cumulative results are presented in Table 2.

The overall mean score of all 14 items measuring the effect of leadership of headteachers on the performance of special school as perceived by headteachers and teachers of special schools is 4.27 and 4.20 respectively shows a very little difference of 0.07 in mean score, therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference among the perception of headteachers and teachers from special schools about the effect leadership performance of special schools.

Table 2. The effect of headteachers' leadership on the performance of Special schools as perceived by headteachers and teachers (N= 150)

Item	Responses The Headteacher:	HT*Mean	T**Mean	Diff in Mean
1	Observes classroom to check teachers' work	3.90	4.05	0.15
2	Needs teachers to write lesson plan with learning outcomes	4.02	4.06	0.02
3	Expects teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a student in sequence	4.52	4.52	0.00
4	Sensitive to the needs of teachers, student, and the community	4.26	4.46	0.20
5	Believes that the academic performance of student dependents on the leadership	4.46	4.42	0,04
6	Supports for change within the school	4.44	4.30	0.14
7	Rationalizes the school's instructional program based on theories of learning	4.48	4.46	0.02
8	Clearly Explains to others what he/ she values within the school	4.28	4.33	0.05
9	Informs teachers about the vision of the school	4.06	3.36	0.70
10	Confirms that the school vision statement is reviewed	3.92	3.35	0.57
11	Explains teachers to work for attaining the school's goals	4.66	4.46	0.20
12	Articulates the belief that school can improve students' life.	4.44	4.44	0.00
13	Gives high importance to the role of education for the improvement of society	4.45	4.50	0.05
14	Believes that teachers' retention is dependent on the job satisfaction & influence of the school.	4.14	4.06	0.08
	Mean Score of all items	4.27	4.20	0.07

HT*, Head Teacher, T**, Teacher

Research Question 3

Was there any difference between the perception of headteachers and teachers working in regular schools about the effect of the leadership of regular schools' headteachers on the performance of regular schools?

Table 3 shows that the headteachers of regular schools scored highest on their response "The headteacher expects teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of student in sequence" (mean 4.52) followed by the response "The headteacher gives high importance to the role of education for improvement of society" (mean 4.48). Contrarily, the teachers of regular schools scored highest in response "The headteacher expects teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a student in sequence" (mean 4.53) followed by "The headteacher is sensitive to the needs of teachers, students and community" (mean 4.47).

The least score by headteachers of regular schools was in domain "The headteacher observes classroom to check teachers' work" (mean 4.02) and the least score by teachers of regular schools was in domain "The headteacher informs teachers of his/ her vision of the school's future" (mean 3.14) Cumulative results are presented in Table 3.

The overall mean score of all 14 items measuring the effect of leadership of headteachers on the performance of regular school as perceived by headteachers and teachers of regular schools is 4.27 and 4.28 respectively shows

a very little difference of 0.01 in mean score, therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among the perception of headteachers and teachers working in regular schools about the effect(s) of leadership on the performance of regular schools.

Table 3. The Effect of Headteachers' Leadership on The Performance of Regular Schools as Perceived by Headteachers and Teachers (N= 150)

Item	Responses The Headteacher:	HT Mean	T Mean	Diff in Mean
1	Observes classroom to check teachers' work	4.02	3.39	0.63
2	Needs teachers to write lesson plan with learning outcomes	4.12	4.09	0.03
3	Expects teachers to "develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes among students"	4.52	4.53	0.01
4	"Sensitive to the needs of teachers, student and the community"	4.46	4.47	0.01
5	Believes that the academic performance of student dependents on the leadership	4.38	4.40	0.02
6	Supports for change within the school	4.26	4.15	0.11
7	Rationalizes the school's instructional program based on theories of learning	4.46	4.47	0.01
8	Clearly explains to others his/her practice of values within the school	4.26	4.31	0.05
9	Informs teachers about the vision of the school	4.06	3.14	0.92
10	Confirms that the school vision statement is reviewed	4.04	3.39	0.65
11	Explains teachers to work for attaining the school's goals	4.38	4.42	0.04
12	Articulates the belief that school can improve students' life.	4.40	4.40	0.00
13	Gives high importance to the role of education for the improvement of society	4.48	4.48	0.00
14	Believes that teachers' retention is dependent on the job satisfaction & influence of the school.	4.12	4.08	0.04
	Mean Score of all items	4.27	4.28	0.01

HT*, Head Teacher, T**, Teacher

Discussion

The effect of headteachers' leadership on performance of school was measured on 14 parameters as stated through items 1- 14 in tables 1 and 2. The present study reveals that the headteachers and teachers both from special and regular schools of Karachi perceived that there is an effect of the leadership of headteachers on the school's performance. There are studies which concluded that there is a correlation between headteachers' leadership and the performance of school (James & Connolly, 2000; Nsubuga, 2008; Sarwat, Hayat, & Qureshi, 2011; Sauer, 2011; Yaakub & Ayob, 1993; & Yukl, 2002).

In contrast, there are research findings that elucidate that there is no correlation among the leadership of school leaders and school performance (Di Vincenzo, 2008; Huffman & Jacobson, 2003; Kouzes &Posner, 2003; & Sawati, Anwar & Majoka, 2011).

Conclusion

The presentation demonstrated the statistically insignificant difference between the perception of teachers and headteachers working in regular schools as well as in special schools about the effect of the leadership of headteachers on the performance of a special school. The headteachers and teachers of regular schools and special schools scored highest on their response "the headteachers expect teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a student in sequence".

Recommendations

Headteachers need to identify their leaderships to explore their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for their professional development on issues relating to management and human relation so that their leadership will result in a positive outcome on the performance of the school.

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