

Principals' Leadership and Human Resource Development in Schools of Pakistan: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract: *This study strives to explore a Private Schools' System (PSS) leadership beliefs and practices in foregrounding human resource development in the fields of professional development and performance management throughout the work of school at its substantive six dimensions: the human, the professional, the organizational, the political, the moral and the managerial dimensions. The study begins by providing a multi-disciplinary review of school leadership and human resource development, which at its core is based on a theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding how school leadership can help organizations accomplish their goals. Using a particularistic case study design incorporating a mixed method approach (QUAL-QUAN model), the paper aims to provide a detailed description of the beliefs and practices of leadership personnel in selected PSS schools in respect to the composition and developmental dynamism of the human resources available to them. Specific dimensions of the study include the teaching staff, the organizational setting, the political and moral aspects of vision and practice; and the managerial components of leading human resource development in the schools.*

The work of school leadership in developing human resource in education is a complex and multifaceted task that involves professional, political, organizational, moral and technical dimensions. It is anticipated that the outcomes of the research will help school leadership in achieving the heightened expectations of schools in different dimensions, exploring ways in which school leadership can strengthen teacher recruitment, development, performance management and retention and identify ways in which school leaders can lift human resource development in an effective manner.

Keywords: Schools' leadership, human resource development, work dimensions, beliefs, practices

Introduction

Principal has a pivotal role in management, development and improvement of a school. An effectively managed school is a depiction of a skilled principal (Mondy, 2010). The ongoing developments in society and their provision of education are reflected in the roles, responsibilities, recruitment and development of school principals. The school principal serves as a buffer in shaping a vision of academic success for the school, creating a climate hospitable for education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instructions, managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

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The job of the school principal cannot be described in a nutshell; neither the multitasking nor shifting roles can be commented upon easily (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). On one hand, a principal leads and manages planning, delivery, evaluation and improvement of education through the strategic deployment of resources available in school while increasing teachers' knowledge base of student learning and quality teaching (Petrie, 2011). On the other hand, he/she assists the school in meeting the overall objectives and the needs of the individual.

An important role of the school principal is the provision of effective teaching and learning to the students through the appointed staff. The objectives of the school which are set by the leadership are also achieved through the services rendered by the staffs (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). Thus, recruitment, selection, hiring, development and the management of the staffs is also another important role of the school principal. The process of selecting, hiring, recruiting, developing, training and performance management are the elements of Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) which the principal does most of the time during his/her tenure (Aloo, Simatwa, & Nyang'ori, 2011).

Human Resource Management and Development assists the school leaders in developing effective strategies of enhancing staffs' performance. HRMD of staffs within schools is based on two important elements: their professional development and their performance management (Starratt, 2011). Professional development of staffs refers to types of in-service educational experiences related to an individual's work. For staff and school leaders to be as effective as possible; continuous expanding of knowledge and skills is required for implementing the best educational practices. Performance management system is a core element of any Human Resource Management entailing strategies which bridge the gap between staffs and the organization and meeting desired targets. The strategies used for evaluating performance help the staff realize that their input and contributions will be recognized and acknowledged and at the same time address underperformance in a timely and constructive manner. The performance management system works in a cyclical fashion and the steps involve planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating (Addi-Raccach, 2012). It has been observed in the Pakistani educational context that school leaders do not pay much of an attention in this important area and neglects the aspect of professional development of their staffs. Moreover, performance management of the staffs is misunderstood with annual appraisal system, giving least importance to timely feedback for corrective measures and improvement (Mahadevan & Mohamed, 2014).

Considering the importance of school principal and his/her role in the development and performance of the staffs, the current study involved the participants from various geographical areas of Karachi as the principals of a private school system (PSS). The study spot light and explored the practices and beliefs of the school principals in particular fields of Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) which were professional development and performance management at the six substantive dimensions of human, professional, organizational, political, moral and managerial within a school. From analysis of the

data, insights would be gained for preparing a recommendation report to the private school system education board with the focus on how the professional skills of school principals in staffs' performance management and professional development can be enhanced with a balance of knowledge, understanding, critical thinking and personal and interpersonal capacities. Pakistan based research into the effectiveness of professional development and performance management of the staffs by the school principals' using the Human Resource Management and Development guidelines, is minimal and this fact became the urging point for this research study.

The study aimed to provide a detailed description of the beliefs and practices of leadership personnel in selected PSS schools in respect to the composition and developmental dynamism of the human resources available to them. Specific dimensions of the study include the teaching staff, the organizational setting, the political and moral aspects of vision and practice; and the managerial components of leading human resource development in the schools.

It is anticipated that the outcomes of the research would help school leadership in achieving the heightened expectations of schools in different dimensions, exploring ways in which school leadership can strengthen teacher recruitment, development, performance management and retention and identify ways in which school leaders can lift human resource development in an effective manner. Consequently, the study will assist the selected school principals to improve their practices of management and leadership for a sustained and accelerated outcome of the school in all fields.

Research Question

The focus of the study was to explore the practices and beliefs of the school principals in foregrounding human resource management and development in its two major fields: the professional development and performance management of the staffs.

Thus the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the practices and beliefs of the school principals of PSS in providing professional development to their staffs within their schools?
2. What are the practices and beliefs of the school principals of PSS in managing the performance of their staffs within their schools?

The study adopted the following hypotheses:

1. It is hypothesized that the school principals of PSS provide effective professional development to their staffs in the required fields for improvement.
2. It is hypothesized that the school principals of PSS manage the performance of their staffs through a formative process throughout the year for improvement.

Review of Literature

Iqbal, Arif, and Abbas (2011) highlighted the importance of the understanding of the Human resource management for the school principals by stating that methods of integrating and maintaining staff in an institution to achieve the purposes and meet the goals for which it was established is all about human resource management. It is the coordination of the activities and efforts of the staff in an institution so that its goals are achieved. In other words human resource management is the process of motivating staff in the organization so as to obtain maximum output from them.

There are many human resource management and development elements that are used by the principal in enhancing the effectiveness of the staff, however, the two most important ones are professional development and performance management of the staff (Johnson & Shields, 2007).

Human Resource Management and Development implies a combination of theories dealing with the social, psychological and economic dimensions of the leadership and staffs (Markow, 2012). The propositions of theories used in this study are the theories of Motivation, behaviorism and humanism. The major role of human resource management by school principals is to promote alternative ways of controlling behavior to reduce the effects of conflicts and minimize the cost to the institution. This includes two approaches of monitoring and incentive giving (Addi-Raccah, 2012).

Bottoms and Schmidt-Davis (2010) mentioned that the principal and teacher leaders within each school must engage the faculty and develop a vision of what the school must do. With the vision, framework and supports in place, the principal arranges situations where staff can also be equally involved in the process of achieving the desired outcomes. If necessary, the principal organizes professional development programmes for staff and ensures the learnings applications in the school. The empowered principal also uses strategies of performance management of the staff as well for continuous improvement.

Performance Management is one of the key methods of Human Resource Management (HRM) and contributes to organizational performance (Mathis & Jackson, 2011). Performance management, on one side, provides a link between organizational needs and its strategic objectives; and on the other side it corroborates that each employee must have some contribution to make to those organizational strategic objectives through his or her job. The term performance management is sometimes confused with one of its basic component-performance appraisal- that according to Mathis and Jackson (2011), is an activity of determining the extent to which employees perform their jobs effectively and communicating that performance to the employees. Performance Appraisal is increasingly considered one of the most important human resource practices Boswell & Boudreau as cited in (Mooney, 2009).

Performance management is a process by which executives, managers, and supervisors work to align employees' performance with the organizational goals. An effective performance management defines the expected performance, monitors and measures the level of employees' performance, and provides them

feedback about their performances (Ivancevich, 2006). Properly planning how performance data will be analyzed, used and presented is at the heart of performance management. Although, both teaching and non-teaching (administrative) staff in schools play an important role in escalating institution's performance, yet teachers are considered to be imperative human resource of educational institutions. Performance evaluation of teachers in terms of their teaching and students' learning outcomes is the primary area of concern for any educational institute and is highly unaddressed issue in case of schools in developing countries like Pakistan.

Schools principals use formal and informal processes and strategies to appraise and review staff performance. There are two main purposes for these efforts; first to support the learning of staff and students and second, to ensure that the work of staff meets school and system accountability requirements. The challenge for school leaders in this area is to ensure that the procedures used maximize staff' professional learning and provide opportunities for them to reflect on their practices (Erdamar, 2011)

The purpose of this study is to analyze the existing practices and beliefs of the school principals regarding professional development and performance management in the contextual private school system (PSS) and to recommend the areas for improvement in order to achieve improved teaching and educational outcomes for students. It has been mentioned earlier that in the local context, there is limited number of private sector organizations who are able to effectively execute the professional development and performance management for their staff, the rest are unaware of it (Ahmed, Hussain, Ahmed, & Akbar, 2010). Though the contextual private school system has not yet developed a proper professional development and performance management system, yet effort are been made to adopt and implement them within the schools. Considering its importance and effectiveness for improved teaching and learning and smooth functioning of schools by principals, therefore, it was been felt that such a study should be conducted.

Research Design

For this research, particularistic case study design incorporating mixed method approach applying QUAL-QUAN model was been selected to provide corroboration and fulfilling the requirements of the study. In the qualitative phase, structured interviews were conducted and in the quantitative phase data was collected through questionnaire from the study participants/respondents to understand their practices and beliefs of professional development and performance management of their staff within their schools. Since, this study required an in-depth search to seek the answers of the aforementioned research questions; consequently, a case study approach was been employed. The study is delimited to only one private school system (PSS) in Pakistan.

The accessible population for this research was the school principals of English and Urdu medium schools of a private school system (PSS) in Pakistan.

From the total accessible population a sample of 25 participants was selected comprising of a total of 18 females and 7 males. In-depth interviews were conducted with five school principals.

The purposive sampling technique was used in collecting data from the research participants as the focus of the research was to explore the practices and beliefs of the school principals in applying professional development and performance appraisal strategies of human resource management and development within their settings. The total research population was 59 school principals out of which 15 expressed their non-availability to participate in the research activity; 17 had not completed the given questionnaire, and 7 returned without filling it up. Therefore the researcher was left with total population of 25 participants who agreed to take part in the research activity and filled in the required questionnaire 5 gave in-depth interviews for the study. All 62 research participants received a copy of the questionnaire which was the main data gathering tool and 20 returned the questionnaires completed according to the given instructions. The results of research are based on these 20 responses and verbatim transcription of 5 interviews.

The questionnaire used for data collection was divided into four sections. Section A was designed to acquire demographic information from the research participants in response to the most suitable variables while the rest of the sections B, C and D were based on attitudinal scales. The two main types of attitudinal scales, namely Likert scale and rating scales, were used in developing the data collecting instrument. Reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach Alpha and was found to be 0.87 which shows high reliability (Nunnally Jr, 1970; Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, & Barrett, 2004; Sharif & Bukhari, 2014; Arif & Aslam, 2014)

Data analysis and Results

Test of Hypothesis 1

It is hypothesized that the school principals of PSS provide effective professional development to their staffs in the required field for improvement.

Item 1: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 1 is 4.9, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.086. This shows that the variable of training and development policy for staff does not exist in the school. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 2: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 2 is 3.2, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.074. This shows that the variable of implementation of the learnt skills of professional development programmes does not exist in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 3: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 3 is 7.2, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.007. This shows that the variable of sharing and cascading the information learnt from the professional development programmes are missing in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Table 1: Practices and Beliefs of School Principals regarding Professional Development of Staff

		Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.
1	My school has a training and development policy applicable to all employees.	4.900 ¹	2	.086
2	I tell staff whether they are doing their work as per the training imparted or not.	3.200 ²	1	.074
3	When employees arrive from training, I encourage them to share what they have learned with other colleagues.	7.200	1	.007
4	My school links training and development with our school's development strategy.	9.800	1	.002
5	My school has full-fledged training and development department manned with competent professionals.	12.400 12.400	3 3	.006 .006
6	I support the use of techniques learned in training that staff bring back to their jobs in school.	.200	1	.655
7	I give staff the chance to tryout their training on the school immediately.	7.200	1	.007
8	I help staff set realistic goals for performing their work as a result of their training.	5.200	2	.074
9	I assign an experienced colleague to help staff coming back after getting training as needed back on the job.	4.900 4.900	2 2	.086 .086
10	I ease the pressure of work for a short time so staff has a chance to practice new skills that are taught in training.	.800	1	.371
11	Physical and material aids (resources or technology) are available in the school to support what staff learned in training.	3.100	2	.212
12	I make sure that staff has the opportunity to use their training immediately.	3.200	1	.074

Source: Author's Estimation

Item 4: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 4 is 9.8, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.002. This shows that the variable of linking professional development of staff with school development strategy does not exist. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 5: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 5 is 0.2, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.655. This shows that there is no concept of a full-fledged professional development department with competent professionals in the school system. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 6: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 5 is 12.5, the degree of freedom is 3 and the asymptotic sign is 0.006. This shows that the variable of supporting the staff in applying learnt techniques for professional development programmes do exist in schools. Therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected.

Item 7: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 7 is 7.2, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.007. This shows that the variable of giving chances to the staff to try out their professional development on the school functions immediately is missing. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 8: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 8 is 5.2, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.074. This shows that the aspect of helping staff set realistic goals for performing their work as a result of their professional development does not exist in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 9: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 9 is 4.9, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.086. This shows that the concept of assigning experienced colleagues and critical friend to the staff after attending the professional development programme does not exist. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 10: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 10 is 0.8, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.371. This shows that there is no relaxation given to staff to practice the new learnings from professional development programmes in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 11: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 11 is 3.1, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.212. This shows that physical and material aids are not provided to the staff to apply the learnt knowledge and skills from the professional development programmes. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 12: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 12 is 3.2, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.074. This shows that the school principals do not provide the opportunity to the staff to use their learnings from professional development programmes immediately. Therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected.

Looking at the chi-square values of all the items used in hypothesis 1, the hypothesis 1 gets completely rejected. This means that the school principals of private school system do not provide effective professional development, nor give them opportunities to practice their learning in the schools.

Test of Hypothesis 2

The school principals of PSS manage the performance of their staffs through a formative process throughout the year for improvement.

Item 1: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 1 is 19.600, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.000. This shows that the variable of students test scores in analyzing the performance of the staff has no effect on their performance in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 2: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 2 is 15.700, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.000. This shows that the students' feedback of the teaching and staff performance has no effect on their performance management by the principals of the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 3: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 3 is 9.700, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.008. This shows that feedback taken from parents is not considered in managing and analyzing the performance of the staff in the schools by principals. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 4: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 4 is 6.700, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.035. This shows that the coordination among the staff, collegiality and smooth functioning has no relationship with the performance management system of the staff in schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 5: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 5 is 7.600, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.022. This shows that there is no concept of a direct appraisal or appreciation of the good work of the staff by the principals in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 6: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 6 is 15.700, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.000. This shows that the innovation, creativity and novelty in the performance of the staff make no impact on the performance management system of the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected.

Item 7: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 7 is 9.800, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.002. This shows that the relationship between teachers and students in the schools has no effect on the performance management of the staff by the principal in the schools. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 8: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 8 is 7.000, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.0194. This shows that the professional development undertaken by the staff has no contribution in their performance management by the principal of the school. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Table 2: Practices and beliefs about school principals on performance management system of staff

		Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.
1	Student test scores.	19.600	2	.000
2	Student feedback on the teaching they receive.	15.700	2	.000
3	Feedback from parents.	9.700	2	.008
4	How well the teacher works with you, the heads/coordinators and their colleagues.	6.700	2	.035
5	Direct appraisal of classroom teaching.	7.600	2	.022
6	Innovative teaching practices.	15.700	2	.000
7	Relations between the teacher and students.	9.800	1	.002
8	Professional development undertaken by the teacher.	7.900	2	.019
9	Teacher's classroom management.	5.000	1	.025
10	Teacher's knowledge and understanding of their main subject field(s).	1.800	1	.180
11	Teacher's knowledge and understanding of instructional practices (knowledge mediation) in their main subject field(s).	3.200	1	.074
12	Student discipline and behaviour in the teacher's classes.	5.200	2	.074

Source: Author's Estimation

Item 9: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 9 is 5.000, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.025. This means that classroom management of teachers in the school has no impact on their performance management system by the principal of the school. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 10: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 10 is 1.800, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.180. This reveals that the subject knowledge of the staff has no effect on the performance management system designed by the school principals. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 11: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 11 is 3.200, the degree of freedom is 1 and the asymptotic sign is 0.014. This shows that teachers' knowledge and understanding of instructional practices in their subject field have no contribution in their performance management by the school principals. Therefore the null hypothesis fails to get rejected.

Item 12: The value of Chi-Square Test for item 12 is 5.200, the degree of freedom is 2 and the asymptotic sign is 0.074. This reveals that students' discipline and behavior management by the staff in the school does not affect their performance management by the school principals. Therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected.

Looking at the chi-square values of all the items used in hypothesis 2, the hypothesis 2 gets completely rejected. This means that the school principals of private school system do not have any concept of performance management system of the staff for effective teaching and learning and functioning of their schools.

Findings and Discussions

The study emphasized that the work of the school is learning, and hence the primary focus on human resource development by school principals should be to improve the teaching and learning process. With learners and their work at the center, teachers and support staff are revealed as human developers in their school. To grow in the work of the designated job whether teacher, administration or support staff in school settings, the professionals must be constantly learning, learning more about their area of specification, their subjects, functions and processes of schools to improvement and development. Following the logic, human resource development then comes to be seen as layered throughout the organization of the schools, involving anyone and everyone who has responsibility for working with a group of people to improve the primary work of the school, which is learning.

The current study emphasized on the human resource development in two major fields: the professional development and the performance management. The quantitative data analysis revealed that the school principals of the private school system (PSS) have no awareness of the importance of professional development or their staff and performance management system for effectiveness

of their schools. The qualitative data on the other hand revealed that professional development of staff, the principals do have an understanding and they also try to make attempts to send them for outsourced professional development programmes from their improvement. However, amazingly, due to multiple internal constraints and pressures, the staff although been sent for professional development does not allow them to practice their learnt knowledge and skills. Internal political and managerial pressures influence the staff to not to cascade and disseminate the learnings to others and the principal cannot help the staff in such situations. Other than this, availability of physical, financial and material aids are also another important reason for this negation. The principals do consider professional development for staff important, however, due to lack of awareness of professional need and requirements, the required opportunities are not provided to them.

School principals were of the view point that they ensure that the concept of performance management system for the staff is not known to them and they follow and practice the annual appraisal system. They agreed to the fact that the likelihood of the annual appraisal system seems a bit weaker as compared to the performance management system spread throughout the year, they showed resentment and discontent in adopting the new management system. Moreover, they also shared their incompetence in understanding and managing the system if adopted by their schools. Most of the principals shared the same practices and beliefs where the performance management system for them is of no worth as the annual appraisal serves the same purpose. For few of the principals, learning new strategies for professional development and performance management of the staff were important, rest believed that their schools and their staff are working in accordance with the settings of the school; therefore, there is no need to go for an anticlockwise rotation of the processes in place at schools.

Nevertheless, the schools principals agreed to the point that they are much closer to the workaround which the whole system of the human resource management and development floats, starting from the daily work of academic learning engaged in school classroom, to management of the staff dealing with all the affairs of the school at large. Principals are the in-house leaders of leaders of human resource development. They have to work, assist, lead and motivate the school staff to attend both the academic and community learning to achieve the goals.

Conclusions and Implications

In this study attempts were made to explore the practices and beliefs of the school principals in foregrounding human resource management and development of the staff in the two major fields of professional development and performance management. A simple theoretical framework was built where the relationship between educational leadership and human resource management and development beliefs and practices were contrasted with each other. Leadership and HRMD theories were taken into account and a theoretical framework

was constructed. Moreover to further support the theoretical framework, a conceptual framework of the selected dependent and independent variables was also constructed to comprehend the research study. The result shows rejection of the designed hypotheses.

The general lesson that emerges from this study is that the practical implication of the learnt theories is important in the current leadership scenario. Although the school principals have shown their commitment, contribution, service and dedication in the improvement of the education sector, they now need to shift their attention towards staff growth and development by focusing more on the application of HRMD strategies. If Private school system's HRMD department takes an account of the effectiveness of the strategies in the registered schools, the desired outcomes can possibly be achieved.

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