



Leadership Capabilities and Role of Principals on Performance of Colleges in Azad Jammu And Kashmir, Pakistan

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Abstract

Traditions of a highly developed system of education, ranging from the “Elementary Mosque School” to the institutions of higher learning started back in AD 711 when Muslims entered South East Asia. The intentional destruction of the Muslim educational system for political reasons, and their consequent deprivation of a rich heritage, which had long served as a source of intellectual and cultural development, was ultimately achieved by the appropriation of the “Rent Free Lands” providing endowments to “Madrasas”. Many national and international studies and research-reports emphasize the inter-dependability between education and national development. College education in Pakistan spreads over post-school to degree education, and the colleges generally fall into three categories according to the level of educational courses provided. This study investigates the leadership capabilities and role of principals in the performance of colleges (Higher Secondary and Degree level). The study has identified leadership capabilities and role position of principals that will influence performance of the institutions. Simple random sampling technique was used to assess the role of principals of the colleges in the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir as respondents. The research finding showed that the leadership has significant role on the performances of principals. The research showed in detail the context and implications of the insignificant role of the female principals in remote rural areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This study also strengthens understanding of the role of principals for the performance of the colleges within a different context to those reported in past. Furthermore, by using a field based survey comprehensively addressing to the role dimensions; the study allows the researcher to provide a rich, deep and comprehensive explanation of the role of principals. The empirical findings of the study provide the basis for recommendations for policy makers in educational sector to initiate

with effective policy framework to make the role of the principals effective for the performance of the colleges in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Introduction:

Improving the quality of education is the goal of national development in the field of education and is an integral part of efforts to improve the human quality in a planned and comprehensive, SA. Branata et al (in Ahmadi, 2001:69).[1] as mandated in the Act of educational system (2003) that the national education goals is to bright the nation. This means that in an effort to achieve the life of the nation is the responsibility of the education, especially in preparing students to be subject devoted to God Almighty, noble, tough, creative, independent, democratic and professional in their respective fields. School as an important vehicle in the formation of qualified human resources will be realized through education unit level. in line with Sedamayanti (2007:13) [2] which states that the purpose of management is to increase and improve the capacity inherent in human capabilities and skills to contribute. Situation on the ground shows the implementation of the school-based management, it is necessary that the principal is able to perform the function of leadership. It must be able to align leadership, follower and situation. Therefore, it is one of the principal factors that can encourage schools to realize the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the school through planned programs.

In terms of leadership, effective principals in the school-based management must meet the criteria as proposed by Wahyosumidjo (2010) [4] as follows: (1) Ability to empower teachers to implement the learning process with a good, smooth and productive, (2) to implement duties and tasks in accordance with the set time, (3) able to establish a harmonious relationship with the school community and the community around the school, so as to involve them actively in order to realize the goal of school and education, (4) Successfully apply the principles of leadership corresponding to the maturity level of teachers and other school employees, (5) Working with the management team, (6) Successfully realizing a productive school purposes in accordance with the conditions set. Furthermore Wahjosumidjo (2010) [4] stated that the low quality of education units in the country and Indonesia at the present time is one of the effects of this form of school leadership organization that manages the educational unit, because leadership is a key factor for effective school or work well, and if the head understand the various forms of school leadership as the need occurs.

Leadership specifies power and influence from various formal or informal sources of position, person, knowledge, and wisdom etc. (Mullins: 1995: 229). It involves how to work with and through people. Richard Gorringer explains educational leadership as taking responsibility for not only setting out the vision, strategy, and action mandatory, but for leading in the process of implementation (Coombe Lodge: 1994). The institutional managers have the responsibility imposed upon them for the processes of implementation and modernization which indirectly force the leadership role upon them. Greenfield (Greenfield and Ribbins: 1993: 162-8) discusses Hodgkinson's idea of leadership in educational management which implies the shaping of people and organizations, the search for better values, the making of choices, and the endless search for, and questioning of the administrators power and choices.

Between school effectiveness and educational leadership (1989: 66) and the role of principals in securing reforms (Ibid: 85), Hattersley (1992) designs a sweeping statement that the quality of the head teacher's leadership is the most important single determinant of the success of the school. Almost all the major research works on institutional leadership acknowledge the importance of the managers' leadership role in the organizational effectiveness, although there are differences in opinions about the degree and ways of effectiveness. Various theories of leadership evolved internationally over the past fifty years in particular; based on different assumptions to achieve this effectiveness. Bryman (1992) offers a broad overview of these approaches from the 1940s to date, putting them in broad categories of trait approach, style and behavior approach, emergency approach, and the new synthesis.

The trait approach presumes that the leaders are born with confident physical assets, personality, and abilities which by default make them into leaders. The behavioral approach connects leadership with organizational behavior stressing the interaction of group relationships, and subsequently draws attention to possibilities of development. According to Contingency Approach in the 1960, there was an increasing understanding of contextual forces which shifted the focus of emphasis from behavior to situation. It was proposed that the forces in the subordinates and the organizational culture, with their complex, varied in demands and constraints may determine how a manager acts besides the personality of the manager.

Handy makes the research that overall effectiveness however, is clearly dependent on more than style alone. Hence what are called contingency theories (1993: 102). The contingency theories distinguish the importance of situation arguing that there is no unique style of leadership

appropriate to all situations (Mullins: 1995: 235). Many of the researchers showed agreement on the role of leadership in the success of organization in any form of leadership. The most important aspect is the occurrence of leadership in organizational function at leading front.

In England colleges' leadership have special trainings and programs for development & improvement purposes. A recent professional progression is that the educational leadership requires trainings in four areas as following: as a Project leadership, as a team leadership, as a college leadership, and as a strategic leadership. Project leadership developmental learning involves when the leader have responsibility of a project like on a smaller level such as curriculum development, pupils supporting services, or learning based research projects in the institution.

Secondly, for development in order to bring performance improvement colleges' leaders require development of skills related with team leadership. It is often for individuals who are leading teams on regular basis such as specific staff group, student group, or task group. Third, college leadership, it is development for improvement in leadership of individuals those who have duties of the entire college establishment. Last and fourth is strategic leadership. It is related with the leadership of establishment that is responsible for strategic planning on mainly national level (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008).

It is also noticed that the college principals those which have greater authorities required more developmental training in order to bring improvements in the performance. However, these trainings also play vital role in the career of principals and so; it can be based on their job agreement or contract like permanent or temporary (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008)

In the epitome, Cuban: 1988 stated that leadership brings change in the organization. According to him leadership means to achieve the goals through people that influence them to do desired actions. In this regards; leaders are individuals that set goals, motivate others and compel them to act in a particular direction (Bush, 2007). Moreover, developing and maintaining success in colleges is a practice focused on educational leadership more than managerial aspects. Caldwell: 1992 stated that leaders often do improvement by implementation of managerial cyclic process(Bush, 2007)

Material and Methods

The research has employed a blend of research methods in this study. Both descriptive and exploratory research methods have influence the design. The research is mainly under descriptive

influence to understanding research problem related to the topic which led to understand the phenomenon and basic issues related to the problem. This method helped in defining the problem in real term based upon interviews, a focus group study and a pilot survey at a limited scale. Current research has utilized data of qualitative nature. The qualitative research approach has been adopted for the study because it will help the researcher to interact directly with the participants to collect their opinion using ranks for measurement. The researcher is seeking to listen from the research participants and make conclusions based on the ideas collected with this method. The qualitative analysis allows the researchers to feel the events and experiences of people. Hence, it was selected to explain the management related experiences of principals in selected collages of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The main categories of concerns that were included in the survey and focus group interviews are as follows:

Instructional leadership – system of changing evaluation, supervision, curriculum development, and professional development

Administration – formulating policies and plans, giving directions, and consultation

Student issues – school bullying, counseling students, and developing different plans to develop social interaction among students

Issues of human resource – teacher stress, gender issues.

Conflict resolution – lowering conflict in different departments

Resource management – fund raising, program cuts

Consulting the parents

Marketing of school with promotional activities

Issues and strategies faced while promoting the quality education

Sample Space

The sample space consists of all the government colleges in the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The total number of colleges in the state under government supervision is 140. These 140 colleges serve as the target population in this research.

Research Location

Azad Jammu and Kashmir is a territory of disputed Kashmir and is located 150 km North East Of Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan. The state has a local government system under the control of Pakistan Government. The area is hilly and remote for access. The capital of Azad Jammu & Kashmir is Muzaffarabad. The history of education system in Kashmir can be divided into different

distinct periods. In olden times of history (120AD-162AD) in the rule of Buddhist ruler Kanshik there was first university in this territory “Sharda university” which is now in Neelum District. Students from different parts of the world including China, Tibbet, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Veitnam were studying in this university. Renowned scholar Al Beruni in his book “Kitab ul Hind” refers to Kashmir as a great learning center.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling techniques were used for stratum selecting the participants for the study because the population has two distinctive groups, male colleges and female colleges. The principals of the colleges were purposively sampled because they are in key positions in the colleges as administrator. They are the right personnel with information about pupils, staff and strategies implemented in the institutions managed by them. According to Creswell (2002), in purposive sampling the researcher intentionally selects individuals to learn or understand a phenomenon (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003). This is also cited in Avoke (2005) has also asserted that purposive sampling enables researchers to handpick the elements to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment. Hence, the researcher builds up a sample that is satisfactory to specific needs. The data was collected through structured questionnaires.

Data Collection Methods

A self-administered survey was conducted and out of 100 colleges 75 returned the complete questionnaire. As mentioned earlier that the questionnaire was used in this study. As the researcher desires to collect factual information on factors contributing to institutional management under the role of principals as managers and leaders, a Likert type questionnaire was developed to collect data for the research questions stated. The questionnaire was made up of 11 close-ended questions for principals. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) close ended questionnaires are quick to compile and straight forward to code without discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are. Use of likert type scale enabled the researcher to attribute numeric codes to a qualitative data as according to Ary et al (2002), the Likert scale is one of the most widely used techniques to measure attitudes. The questions in the data collection instrument were based on research questions raised to guide the study in the first chapter.

Results and Discussion

The research includes majority of male principals because in many of the colleges the principals are male. The representation of male colleges in 57 % and female 36 % with 3 colleges as co-

education.64 % of the colleges sampled in survey is located in towns and 36 % in remote areas. Remote areas are hard to access and distant from town centers. The colleges in these areas are usually lack the quantity of resources compared to the colleges in town. The important finding of the research is the level of experience. The data descriptions showed that 56 % principals are having experience less than 3 years and in the rest of the participants 36% have experience as a principal between 3 to 5 years .Only 8% of the principals participating in the field survey has 5 years or more experience. 86 % of the principals have master degree and 16% hold a PhD. Regarding the experience as a principal the majority participating principals is a pool of less experience institutional heads. The data regarding the qualifications of the principals is not appearing as satisfactory. This situation leads to the conclusion that most of the colleges in Azad Jammu and Kashmir are lacking adequate resources as desirable in higher education.

The educational leadership refers to the extent of emphasizing and encouraging professional development and teaching improvement which impacts the performance of students and institutional effectiveness. Using the leadership skills and role a principal creates and establishes an influence on followers. By creating a vision and effective communication a principal engages the staff to contribute their efforts

The leadership has been found significant to influence the performance of colleges in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. In the current data survey the participant has highly recognized the importance of leadership role as a principal. The responses are showed in %age form in below table.

	Male	Female	Total	Town	Hard (Remote)	Total
Strongly Agree	15	12	27	18	7	24
Agree	39	24	64	42	27	69
Neutral	5	4	9	4	3	7
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Responses (%)	59	41	100	64	36	100

Percent Comparison of Male, Female, Town and (Hard) Remote Areas in Role Perception of Principals in Leadership.

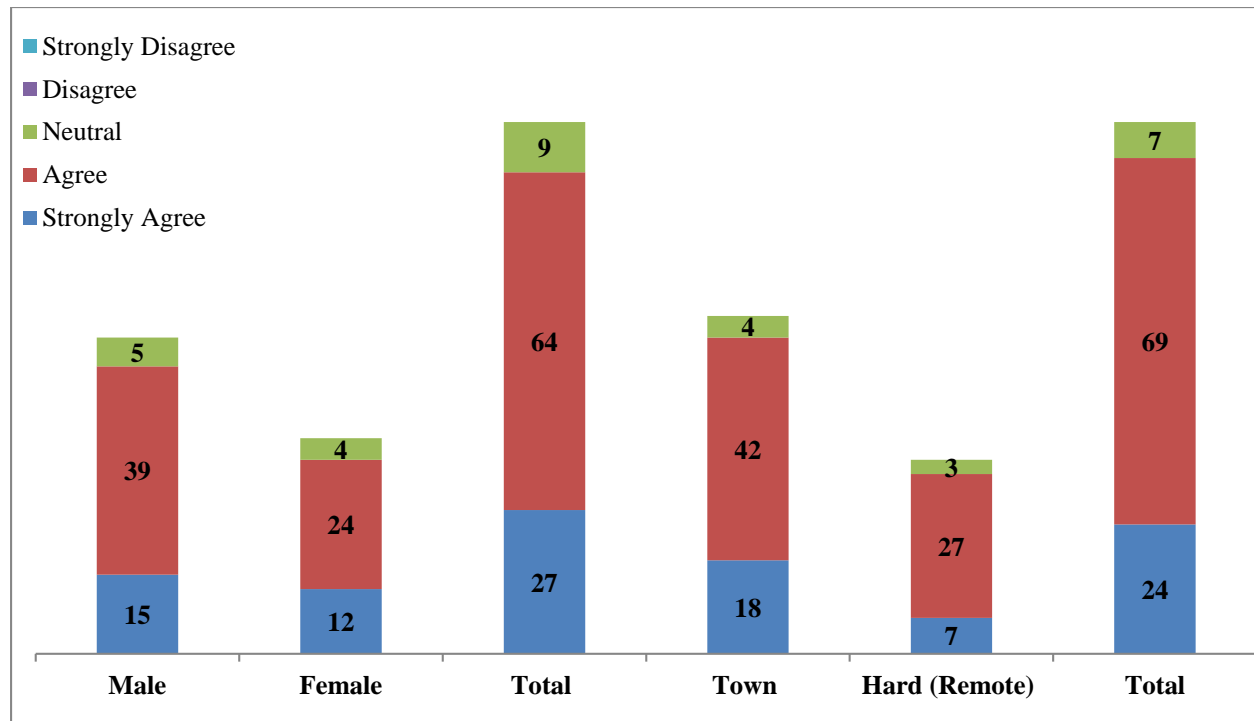


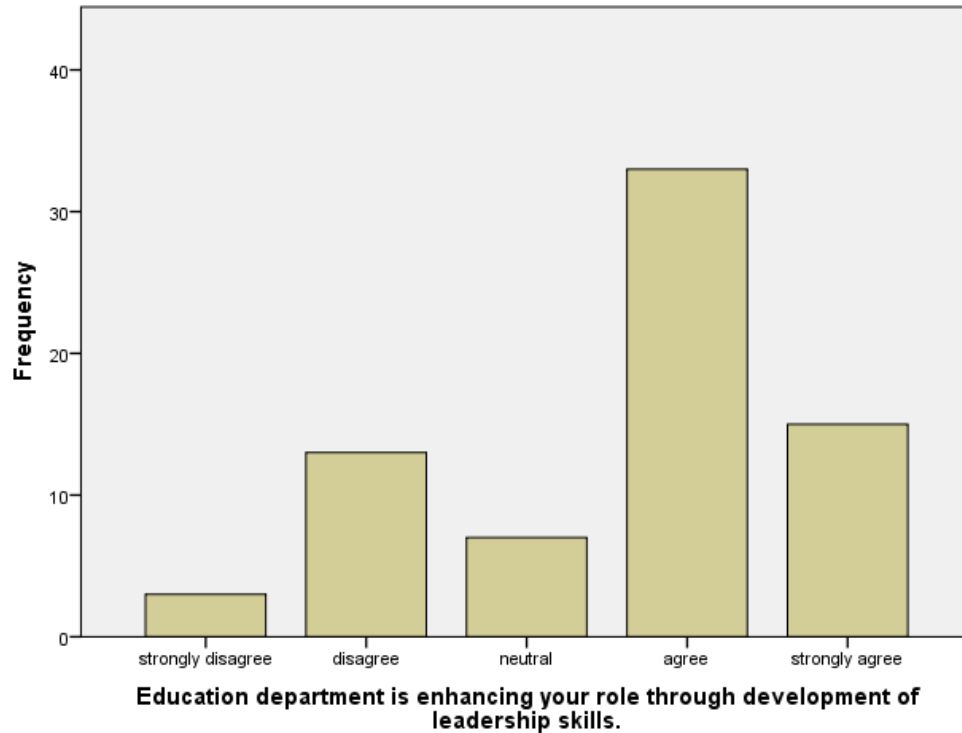
Fig:Percent Comparison of Male, Female, Town and (Hard) Remote Areas in Role Perception of Principals in Leadership

This is very important indicator that principals understand the importance of role and its impact in getting contribution. The mostly respondent are agree (64%) and (27%) are strongly agree both in female colleges (24%) agree and (12%) strongly agree and male colleges who are (39%) agree and (15%) strongly agree in response to this very important indicator. While analyzing the town and remote areas (18%) respondent in towns are strongly agree and 42% are agree and in remote areas (27%) are agree and (7%) and strongly agree. The major important factor identified in making leadership role significant to influence the performance is the factor that educational system in the state is placed well and principals in that role position where they can be highly influential to create a significant influence on performance. Majority of respondents of the survey has agreed as (69%) are agreed and (24%) are strongly agreed in town and remote areas and (64%) are agreed in female and male colleges that they are given adequate importance by their leadership role in educational system.

In the developed world the efforts of principal preparation and development have intensified, innovations in both leadership development programs and program structures have proliferated. There are different types of emphasis on programmatic approaches to leadership development. Some reformers are emphasizing leadership and management skills over academic proficiency

while others support the cultivation of teachers who understand instruction deeply and demonstrate leadership potential. Despite the variance in emphasis on dimensions, the need for developing leadership is broadly agreed (Stephen Davis, 2005).

Principals do recognize that the leadership role is important than the administrative role. This identification by this study has already been confirmed in many studies and this has also been discussed in chapter 2 (literature review). Cognitive level of the principals is the bases of their role at functional level what they assume and perform. The contradictory factor here is that in current set up principals assume their role as an administrator. This role perception is actually because of the administrative structure of the education department in the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This was also found that educational department is contributing to enhance the role of the principals through efforts to enhance their leadership skills. Although the departmental efforts to enhance the leadership role of principals is recognized by the principals participating in this survey but in overall effect this factor is insignificant influencer on performance. Analyzing the survey data this is clear that department has been failed to place the principals in right role position in existing educational structure of the state. The structural problem to place leadership is also an issue in developed countries. Regarding the role placement many principals in USA also lack the wherewithal, authority, resources and capacity to lead effectively (Chester E. Finn, 2014).



(Survey Data,2014)

The most important contributor to develop and enhance this role is management training which has been found significant influence on leadership. The framework of leadership development is important in enhancing the role of the principals. This has also been identified in current research that management development has significant influence of leadership. This implies that proper training with an objectivity to enhance the leadership skills can pay an important role in improving leadership skills of principals. Researchers also have suggested assessment of the evolution of roles in administrative practice in contextual changes in developments in national and state education policy. They suggest that particular directions for future developments in the educational leadership roles of principals in the United States are important to establish the role of principals as leader with adequate skills (Hallinger, 1192). The leadership role of principals enables the institutions in challenging conditions and in a research in USA principals shared common characteristics notably, the core leadership practices of direction setting, developing people and redesigning the organization in challenging conditions. Principals as a leader managed to set and maintain a sense of purpose and direction for their schools and generally exerted a positive influence on people's willingness to follow their lead (Stephen L. Jacobson, 2005). The leadership

role actually influence the way in which a principal experiences his own leadership position. Their leadership role helps them in creating an organizational structure to foster and reinforce teacher leadership as well. They become able to provide staff with opportunities to excel. Under an effective leadership of principals, participation of staff in decision making encourage their risk taking propensity and feedback on their initiatives help to design strategies of future improvement. Based on data in the study it has been concluded that current organizational set up of colleges in AJK is not as adequate to leadership role. Leadership role of the principals have been acknowledged one of the key indicator in many research studies. The leadership role is vital for getting enthusiastic contribution of the members of the organization towards achievement of organizational goals but this is lacking adequate influence under the role of principals of colleges in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

It was concluded that principals are not involved in an effective interaction with community. Sharing of information between principals of colleges in particular area, district or at state level is not in practice. Hence overall higher educational structure is lacking collaboration to get benefit of mutual experience and learning.

In order to produce conducive learning environment in the colleges, Principals should be equipped with management skills. There is a need that the education department should arrange induction training and in-service training courses for Principals. Training is considered essential for transforming the potential into professional competencies of the principals for assuring the efficiency and effectiveness of educational programs at college level in AJK. Government should provide the colleges with enough resources and decision making power for utilization of these resources which would enable principals to structure their roles to pursue educational objectives of the policy of the state rather than being encumbered with trivial items that might be a cause of deviation from the real purpose. There is a need of the time to provide an opportunity to the heads of colleges to participate in matters regarding curriculum planning and implementation effectively with a special input of their experience.

To make leadership role effective, the authority and reporting structure need reforms. Heads of colleges must be given a leadership role with a good degree of autonomous position to manage organizational resources at college level. Govt. should provide facilities to rural and urban colleges too. The major decisions like allocation of resources and grants for institution, appointments and transfers should be made free from political influence.

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