Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Heads' Leadership Styles as Contributors for Change

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Abstract

Change is the essence of life having vital role in the working of social organizations. The pace of change not only depends upon the leaders enforcing the change but also on their adopted leadership style. Both helps in making the change acceptable for the society. The study at hand focused on the analysis of teachers' perceptions regarding leadership styles contributing for emergent and acceptable change. Purpose of study was to determine leadership styles and their respective influence on the orientation towards change at school level. A sample of 308 secondary school teachers were selected randomly from conveniently selected 40 public sector secondary schools across two districts viz. Okara and Kasur. The data were collected with the help of two questionnaires from the secondary level teachers. These were Scale for Assessing Perceptions about Leadership Styles (SAPLS) and Scale for Assessing Perceptions about Change (SAPC). Cronbach Alpha reliability of both the questionnaires were 0.85 and 0.82 respectively. Research findings revealed that there exist significant relationship between teachers' perceptions about leadership styles and the change process although no significant difference between male and female leaders' perceptions about change was observed. It was recommended that the leaders may be given orientation about handling the change and its relative effects.

Keywords: Change contributor, Leadership styles, Gender wise perception

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Introduction

Leadership is the key component responsible for the success or failure of an organization or the educational institution. While discussing about the leadership it is often argued who should be the leader? In simple words a leader is followed by a group of people or the person who can guide, motivate and organize his/her follower to achieve specific goals. Moreover, he/she can render the aid and support to others in the accomplishment of a common task (Chemers, 2014). Similarly, Gordon, (2017) describes that a leader is an individual who is working with people to do new things in a world which is increasingly getting complex. Likewise Bass (1990) stated that leadership does not only mean to influence the others but it is to interact positively and effectively. Miller has described leadership in terms of five characteristics i.e. Trust, Action, Perspective, Focus and Vision. Moreover, the ability to influence a group of employees' values, beliefs, attitudes and behavior is also referred as the leadership (Ganta, & Manukonda, 2014). Ciulla (2004) proposes that "Leadership is largely a social construction based on the values and events of the times. The idea of a leader is shaped by what people in a culture think a leader ought to be" (pp. 116). In short it may be stated that leadership it is the process of running an organization more effectively and efficiently to achieve the objectives of the organization with the mutual understanding of all the stakeholders.

In the same way effective and vibrant leadership is essential for the progress, improvement and development of all the domains of life. Educational leadership has been a core subject of research for policy making and implementation in education system since long (Bass, 1990; Carlyle, 2011). The gender discrimination in case of leadership is also an important issue. The women are getting appointed at administrative posts in higher proportions than the previous decade (Brenner et al., 1989; & Powell et al., 2002). It was commonly considered that the leadership of males is better than females but how can we say like that without any research evidence. Many studies has illustrated that the view of successful leader's leadership images similar to the "male image" and those generally male leaders are more regarded as successful leaders than female leaders (Powell and Butterfield, 1979, 1989, Brenner et al., 1989; Schein et al., 1996; Deal and Stevenson, 1998; Powell et al., 2002).

Similarly, it was noted by Hollander and Offermann, (1990) that the conception of leadership depends on certain distinguished characteristics possessed by the particular leader. These characteristics are inborn, fixed and universal. The men as leaders may be perceived as better as and more effective than women (Carroll, 2006; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). But in some of the cases women may prove best leader. Also in some of the popular publications it is stated clearly that a feminine type of leadership have more advantages in modern organization (Zenger & Folkman, 2011). Eagly and Carli

(2007) also noted that at lower level of management the women proved good leaders in some of the cases while at higher level it seems different.

The same is the case in educational domain where at the lower level female leaders can effectively handle the institutions. In the ever changing globalized environment of educational institutions the role of leadership for directing and coordinating for effective human enterprises has become more crucial (Wamy & Swamy, 2014). Theorem, in such situation intelligence and emotional balance of leaders are being considered the key characteristics of present day leaders (Müllera & Turner 2007; Boyatzis, 2009). Hence, this study was conducted to determine the Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Heads' Leadership Styles as Contributors for Change.

Literature Review

There are certain glimmers, ambitions and goals for the successful future in the professional life of leaders. Ambitions and goals are not sufficient for successful future. Future can be made successful by taking actions and steps into practice. Different kind of skills and knowledge are required to make these actions in practice (Bates, 2000). Changes are required to make the organization sustainable and successful. Organization should implement changes according to customer references, technologies and changing trends (Restine, 1993). Similarly, Neves, (2009) states that change is the dire need of time for success of organization in achieving the set goals. In the same way Boston, (2000) claims that organizations' survival and success can be ensured through organizational change. Organizations cannot sustain without ensuring the organizational change and face loss of market share and repute as consequences. Many researchers accepted the worth of administrative change. But this administrative change is not a key for successful organizations. It is a fact that administrative change is the predictor of organizations sustainability. But it is the need of hour to take practical steps (Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). Question arises that "who will take initative to bring these changes for organization to take practical steps". Leadership role is significant to answer administrative change issues (Kennedy, 2000). Leaders is the sole change agent for the organizational change (Senior & Fleming, 2006). Changes in organization can be brought up to make them goal achiever and profitable with the acceptance of leadership role as change (Restine, 1993). School is a single organization that can bring the changes in society (Carlyle, 2011; Craig, Gregus, Burton, Rodriguez, Blue, Faith, & Cavell, 2016). As mentioned above a leader is the sole change agent that can change the organization effectively.

In the past different researches had shown that perceptions about leadership and its styles can lead to positive change in the organizations. For example Hao and Yazdanifard (2015) noted that it is a common perception if there is no leadership in the

organization then there will be no desired change. In such situation negative change may be experienced which may harm the cause of the organization. It has also been observed that the inability of proper understanding of change accomplishment procedures and the failure to adjust one's management style lead to hurdles to success and delay the change (Bossidy, Charan & Burck, 2002; Gilley, 2005). In addition to this Kotter (2007) viewed change as a transformational process, so the agents of change i.e. the leaders, must have to drive a supportive response for change from the stakeholders.

Objective of the Study

Objectives of the study were to
1. Determine the school teachers' perceptions about leadership styles
2. Compare the male and female school teachers' perceptions about leadership styles of school leaders.
3. Ascertain the perceptions of school leaders about change.
4. Compare the male and female school teachers' perceptions about change
5. Determine relationship between leadership styles and perceptions about change

Methodology

In this study effort was made to determine the teachers' perceptions about leadership styles and their contribution in change. The intention of the researchers was to correlate the leadership styles and perceptions of school leaders about change. Hence correlational approach was considered suitable for carrying out this study. The population of the study comprised of male and female secondary school teachers working in the public secondary schools of Okara and Kasur districts. The sample of study consisted of 318 secondary school teachers (156 Male and 152 Female) randomly selected from 40 public sector schools of two districts selected conveniently. Two self-developed questionnaires were used to ascertain teachers' perceptions about leadership styles and for school change. The first scale i.e. Scale for Assessing Perceptions about Leadership Styles (SAPLS) comprised of 38 items. This scale was further divided into six sub factors viz. Commanding, Affiliation, Democratic, Coaching, Pace setting and Visionary. The second scale i.e. Scale for Assessing Perceptions about Change (SAPC) comprise of 25 items. This scale comprised of 9 factors viz. Personal management, Life Long Learning, Teambuilding, Stakeholder Cooperation, Effective Planning, Allocation of Budget and resources, Overcoming resistance, Decision making, Vision Building. Before the final administration, the scales were pilot tested. There were 47 participants in try out process who were not included in the final data collection. The coefficient of reliability was calculated as 0.85 and 0.82 for the Scale for assessing perceptions about leadership styles and Scale for Assessing Perceptions about Change respectively. Both

the scales were reliable as Devillis (2003) suggest that factor having alpha reliability Coefficient equal or more than 0.70 is reliable.

For the purpose of data collection, the researchers visited the sampled institutions and approached the school leaders requesting them to fill in the questionnaires. The collected data was analyzed through descriptive statistics i.e. mean scores and standard deviation, and the inferential statistics i.e. independent sample t-test and Pearson correlation were applied using SPSS 21.

Findings/Results

The analysis of data through SPSS yielded the following results

Table 1: *Perceptions about Leadership Style*

Leadership Styles	Mean	St. Deviation
Commanding	3.40	0.61
Affiliation	3.46	0.86
Democratic	3.44	0.99
Coaching	3.61	1.01
Visionary	3.52	0.86
Pace setting	3.54	1.14

Explored mean scores show that among six leadership styles Coaching ($\overline{x}$=3.61, S.D.=1.01), Visionary ($\overline{x}$=3.52, S.D.=0.86) and Pace-setting ($\overline{x}$=3.54, S.D.=1.14) have highest means which reflect that these aspects are perceived more practicable as compared to Commanding ($\overline{x}$=3.40, S.D.=0.61), Affiliation ($\overline{x}$=3.46, S.D.=0.86) and Democratic ($\overline{x}$=3.44, S.D.=0.99). The analysis reflects that the school leaders were practicing Visionary and Pace Setting Styles of leadership more frequently.

Table 2: *Comparison between male and female Perceptions about leadership styles*

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	156	3.46	0.89	306	-0.421	0.675
Female	152	3.44	0.90			

Data analysis illustrate that there is no significant differences (p = .675 >.05) between male and female teachers' perceptions about leadership styles. Hence same styles of leadership were being practiced by the male as well as female school leaders.

Data analysis in the above table reflects that Stakeholders Cooperation ($\overline{x}$=3.60, S.D.=1.07), Lifelong Learning ($\overline{x}$=3.54, S.D.=0.78) and Teambuilding ($\overline{x}$=3.50, S.D.=0.97) factors of change are more comprehensively perceived by the teachers than those of Effective Planning (-$\overline{x}$=2.96, S.D.=0.82), Vision Building ($\overline{x}$=3.20, S.D.=0.84), Decision making ($\overline{x}$=3.30, S.D.=0.68), Personal management ($\overline{x}$=3.33, S.D.=0.92),

Budget and resources and Overcoming resistance ($\bar{x}$=3.42, S.D.=0.97). The above table reflects that school leaders have better perceptions about Cooperation, Lifelong Learning and Teambuilding aspects of the change.

Table 3: *Teachers' Perceptions about change Factors*

Factors of Change	Mean	St. Deviation
Personal management	3.33	0.92
Life Long Learning	3.54	0.78
Teambuilding	3.50	0.97
Stakeholder Cooperation	3.60	1.07
Effective Planning	2.96	0.82
Allocation of Budget and resources	3.38	0.97
Overcoming resistance	3.42	0.98
Decision making	3.30	0.68
Vision Building	3.20	0.84

Table 4: *Comparison of male and female teachers' perception about change*

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	156	3.45	0.90	306	1.652	0.102
Female	152	3.43	0.89			

This analysis of data in the above table illustrates that there is no significant difference (p= 0.102>.05) between perceptions of male and female teachers about change. Hence male and female school leaders demonstrated similar perceptions about the change.

Table 5: *Relationship between Leadership Styles with Change*

	Change	
	Pearson Correlation r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Leadership Style	.382**	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Data analyses in the table above shows that leadership styles have significant relationship (p= 0.000<.05) with school teachers' perceptions about change.

On the other hand sub-factors of both the variables i.e. leadership styles and Change perception also co-relate with each other in different ways. The detail of this correlation is given in the below table.

Table 6*: Relationship of Leadership Styles with subscales of Change*

Factors of Change	Commanding	Affiliation	Democratic	Coaching	Visionary	Pace Setting
Personal Management	.319**	.379**	.188	.241*	.276**	.152
Life Long Learning	.414**	.380**	.309**	.351**	.368**	.182
Team Building	.290**	.271**	.341**	.250*	.227*	.087
Stakeholder Cooperation	.144	.283**	.110	-.019	.135	.158
Effective Planning	.138	.194*	.013	-.076	.167	.054
Allocation of Budget and Recourses	.420**	.191	.158	.088	.075	-.063
Decision Making	.484**	.265**	.099	.131	.190	.061
Overcoming Resistance	.489**	.310**	.262**	.229*	.276**	.372**
Vision Building	.150	-.126	-.161	.155	-.104	.404**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Data analysis showed in table no 6 that Commanding has significant relationship with the factors of change Personal "Management (r =.319, p= .001), Learning (r =.314, p=.000), Team building (r = .290, p=.003), Budget and Resources (r = .420, p=.000), Decision making (r = 484, p=.000) and Overcoming resistance (r =.489, p= .000). The second factor Affiliation of leadership style has also significant relationship with the factors of change in Personal management (r =.379, p=.000), Learning (R=.380, p=.000), Team building(r = .271, p= .006), stake holders (r =.283, p= .004), Decision making (r =.265, p= .007) and Overcoming resistance (r = .310, p=.001). Democratic leadership style has significant relationship with the factors of change in Learning (r = .309, p= .001), Teambuilding (r = .341, p= .000) and Overcoming resistance(r = .262, p= .008). In the same way Coaching has significant relationship with the factors of Change in Learning (r = .351, p= .000). Moreover the Visionary can bring changes in Team building (r = .276, p= .005), Personal management (r = .368, p=.000), Learning (r = .276, p= .005) and Overcoming resistance (r = .372, p=.000). Furthermore Pacesetting can also bring change only in the Overcoming resistance (r = .372, p=.000).

Conclusion

It has been concluded that Commanding Leadership style brings the change in Personal management, Learning, Team building, Budget & Resources, Decision making and Overcoming resistance. The secondly Affiliation leadership style brings the change in Personal management, Team building, stake holders, Decision making and Overcoming resistance. Similarly, Democratic leadership style brings the change in Learning, Teambuilding and Overcoming resistance. In the same way Coaching Leadership style brings the change in Learning. Moreover, the Visionary Leadership style brings changes in Team building, Personal management, Learning and overcoming resistance. Furthermore, Pacesetting Leadership style brings change only in the Overcoming resistance. Results of the study show that leadership style Commanding is more effective and best for practice because it brings change in maximum aspects.

It was also concluded that the leadership style "Commanding" fails to bring change in Stake holder, Planning and Vision. Affiliation Leadership style fails to bring the change in Budget & resources and Vision. As well as Democratic Leadership style fails to bring the change in Personal management, Stake holders, Planning, Budget & resources, Decision making and Vision . In the same way, Coaching Leadership style fails to bring the Change in Stake holders, Planning, Budget & resources, Decision making and Vision. Moreover the leadership style "Visionary" fails to bring the change in Stake holders, Planning, Budget & resources, Decision making and Vision. As well as Pacesetting Leadership Style fails to bring the change in Personal management, Learning, Stakeholders, Planning, Budget & resources and Decision making.

Discussion

Different leadership styles are implemented by the school leaders. The study at hand has reflected that Coaching and Pacesetting are the most frequent practiced leadership style whereas Democratic and the Commanding styles are least preferred styles. These styles matches the requirement of Pakistani institutions as there is always need for coaching the teachers as well as the students in different stairs of life including the academic and social. Moreover time management and keeping pace with the ever-changing educational environment demands to keep pace with it. Therefore the leaders are preferring the pacesetting style of leadership.

Change is considered as a significant parameter for a dynamic organization. In this study researchers made an effort to explore how Pakistani school leaders perceived about change in an educational organization. Results of the study revealed that Stakeholders Cooperation, Lifelong Learning and Teambuilding are more comprehensively perceived for change in educational institutions than those of Effective Planning, Vision Building, Decision making, Personal management, Budget and

resources and Overcoming resistance. Stakeholders' cooperation is perceived comprehensively because in Pakistani situation public private competition is emerging day by day to attract the community, institutions are deeming for different stakeholders to uplift the status of their institutions. In this regard community participation in the institutional affairs is continuously increasing. The same is the case with teambuilding as has no institution can perform wonders without effective, cooperative and enthusiastic personnel.

As discussed earlier the challenges of change not only need proper management are also important framing the vision of the leadership. The study reveals that the leadership styles of the school heads are positively correlated with the change, therefore it is important to make the leaders aware of the factors which are significantly contributing to the positive changes I the institution, If we go with the theory that leader can be produced, then it will be the interesting area for researchers to stream line the necessary conditions for the preparation of visionary leaders, who not only possess the analytical skills for handling the confronted situations but also have an ability to perceive the desirable or successful future for the organizations.

Similarly, the study reveals different leaders' leadership styles effectively contributing for change viz. commanding, affiliation, democratic, coaching, visionary and pace setting. This result is comparable with different studies carried out in the past viz. Powell and Butterfield, 1979, 1989, Brenner et al., 1989; Deal and Stevenson, (1998); Schein et al., (1996); Powell et al., (2002). In terms of the interaction of leadership styles with change, there is no significant difference between perceptions of male and female leaders. This is probably because leadership is considered to be behavior that should be displayed by all leaders and is not correlated with gender (Cheng et al., 2002, 2003), Cheng1 and Ying Lin, (2012).--

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