An Investigation of School Leadership Effectiveness at Secondary Level in District Sargodha

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Abstract

The major objective of this study was to investigate the school leadership effectiveness at the secondary level in the district of Sargodha. A survey research design was used to investigate the phenomenon. The population of the study was the school heads of government secondary schools of Tehsil, Sargodha. The sample was comprised of one hundred and sixty heads of government secondary schools in Tehsil, Sargodha. The data were collected through a questionnaire developed by the researchers. The validity of the instrument was done through expert opinion from three professors. The inter-reliability of the questionnaire was measured by using Cronbach Alpha. The value of the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.863. The instrument was developed on the basis of the Alpha Leadership Model which has three aspects- anticipation, alignment, and action. It consisted of thirty statements. Mean, Standard Deviation, and independent sample t- test were applied to analyze the data. A significant difference was found between female and male school leaders in their school leadership effectiveness. The male school leaders appeared stronger than female school leaders in their school leadership effectiveness. No difference was found between urban and rural school heads' leadership effectiveness. It was suggested that yearly training workshops may be arranged for female heads to further develop their leadership skills.

Keywords: Alpha, effectiveness, school leadership, transactional, transformational.

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Introduction

Education is the fundamental right of human beings. The moral, social, and economic development of a nation depends on education .The aim of education is to develop the abilities that are present in human beings and to prepare them to fulfill their needs and the needs of the society. The children become adults and are able to play a positive role in the society. In other words, education prepares a new generation according to demands of the society. The process of education starts at home. So it is right to say home is first place from where children start learning and parents are the first teachers. All the stakeholders are important for the education of the whole child. But the leaders of the institutions are considered the most effective part in the education of child and success of the institutions.

Bass (1990) first used the word *leader* in the English language in the year 1300 but the leadership word appeared in the English language in the mid nineteenth century. He said that the leadership word was recently added in modern languages. Many theories were developed on leadership because it is a complex phenomenon. Different people defined leadership by their own point of view. As Tead (1935) explained, leadership is process of influencing people to such an extent that they ready to cooperate to achieve a common goal. The interaction between the leaders and followers is so important. The followers are always looking at leaders for direction and they tend to trust in leaders (Slater, 1994). Day (2000) also stated that leadership is basically creating a vision of an organization and effective sharing of the vision with workers. In the past, people had been looking towards their leaders for direction, purpose, and in time of difficulties. Leaders bring their people from trenches towards paths of success and guide them to achieve meaningful goals (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Leadership is an art of having impact on the actions of well-organized groups in order to attain goals. It is a personal and intangible quality, a combination of example, persuasion, and compulsion. It is the extension of one's self, his personality and his character. The quality of leadership is the final measure of his work done. People expect their leaders to set a good example in every way to be efficient, just, and genuinely interested in their personal welfare.

Great man leadership theorists believed that leaders are extraordinary people. They are seen as having been born with qualities to lead people. On the other hand, traits theorists claimed that leadership qualities exist

with abundance and continue to produce; the traits may include intelligence, appearance, strong communication skills, etc. Behavioral theorists believed that effective leaders are those who have certain behaviors and good personal relationships with people. They thought that leaders' behavior is important and not their qualities. This pattern of behavior is called leadership style. In a situational leadership, the leader reacts according to the situation in which it is being exercised. The leaders have to adopt different styles in different situations. Sometimes they adopt autocratic and sometimes democratic styles of leadership in a the same organization. The contingency theorists believed that success of leadership depends on two things-first situation and second style of leadership. The theories of the 21st century about leadership concentrate on vision and charismatic qualities of leaders. There are two approaches in this regard-transactional and transformational. According to the transactional approach, the relationship between the leader and subordinate is based on bargaining where two parties get maximum benefits – a win-win outcome. While transformational leadership has been based on mutual trust and the charismatic qualities of leaders, the emphasis was shifted towards leadership organization rather than developing leaders per se.

Alpha leadership model was presented by Dilt, Deering, and Russel (2009). Alpha leadership model is a latest recent model which contained the latest knowledge about the characteristics of effective leadership. Leadership is basically leading and influencing others by action and words. This model contain three aspects-anticipation, alignment, and action.

Anticipation is referred to as the ability of leader to be conscious of future happening before they occur. In other words, they apprehend and predict the situation .The leader's ability is to be aware about what is going to happen in the future. The leaders can detect the weak signal and can anticipate the upcoming trends. In response to the changing trends and patterns the leaders have enough flexibility to adjust. This process of adjustments makes the leader to manage the resources to timely deal with new circumstances.

Alignment referred to how the leader engages and interacts with others. The leader gives the same directions to all persons to achieve set goals. The leader develops personal power through embodiment. He combines various leadership styles and establishes rapport and cooperation. The leader tries to create an environment which leads towards success. In other words, the leaders align all workers using motivational tactics. When all workers are directed in the same direction success is assured. The alignment is the most important task of the leader.

The action aspect of a leader is related to significant tasks to achieve the specific goals. The leader efficiently uses the resources for maximum advantages. He knows where to tap. The leader is proactive and sensitive to feedback, as well. In all this process the leader remains very clear about organizations' goals and personal mission.

The research on educational leadership is a vast field which includes different aspects of leadership, like style and effectiveness of leadership. The educational research mostly has stressed on the school heads as leaders (Fullan, 2001). The educational research has also explored the effects of heads on the institutes. A decision of a leader is important in achieving goals and the right decision at the right time takes the institute to a level of excellence. School improvement needs support in learning of students and capacity building of the school's staff. This leadership capacity is required which is based on intelligence, tricks, and skills.

School leadership effectiveness is an important area of research in the field of education. The research conducted in this area was mostly focused on role of heads in school effectiveness. The study conducted by Zahid and Gihar (2012) in India found that there was a significant difference gender wise in school leadership effectiveness. They found that males were more effective leaders than their female counterparts. They attributed this result to male dominance in India, which makes the male more adjustable. Therefore they recommended training for females. Similar results of significant difference were revealed by the study of Tatla and Iqbal (2012). Genderwise differences in leadership effectiveness are repeatedly found in the literature. (Eagly, Karau & Johnson, 1992; Salfi, Virk & Hussain, 2014). The literature also showed that females use more democratic practices than males and prefer distributed leadership.

Secondary education provides the basis for higher education. It is an important level of education in any educational system. In the context of school education, leadership plays a pivotal role in developing and enhancing teaching quality, learning outcomes, school environment and teacher-parent's relations, etc. So keeping in view the importance of school education and leadership, this study is aimed at examining the school leadership effectiveness at the secondary level in Sargodha District.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:
1   Examine secondary school leadership effective at secondary level in the district of Sargodha.
2   Compare secondary school leadership effectiveness by gender and location

Null Hypotheses

Following were the null hypotheses of the study:
H_{01} There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school heads' leadership effectiveness.
H_{02} There is no significant difference between rural and urban school heads' leadership effectiveness.

Methodology

A survey research design was used to examine school heads' leadership effectiveness. In this study data were collected to test the hypotheses about school leadership effectiveness in secondary school. According to Gay (2000), random sampling is the process in which all the individuals have equal and independent chance of being selected for a sample. The study was carried in the district of Sargodha. A sample of hundred and sixty heads was selected from Tehsil, Sargodha consisting of headmasters, headmistresses, and head teachers.

In this study a questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on a Likert scale. The respondents were asked to show responses on five point i.e. strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (UD), disagree (DA), and strongly disagree (SDA). The tool was based on Alpha model of leadership. This model covers three main aspects- anticipation, alignment, and action. Initially the researchers developed forty five statements which were reduced to thirty after ensuring its validity and reliability. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through the expert opinion of three experts. They rejected fifteen statements on the basis of conceptual issues related to Alpha Model. They suggest improvements in the grammar of the statements and also suggest that statements should be written in easy words. The tool was then piloted before administering it for the final data. It was piloted on 20 respondents who were not the part of actual study. The inter-item

reliability coefficient was found to be 0.863 which indicated a high level of reliability of the instrument. Final instrument consisted of thirty statements. Sixty questionnaires were mailed and one hundred questionnaires were personally given to heads of the secondary school of Tehsil, Sargodha. The researchers faced many problems in data collection. They had to visit many times to collect the data from the heads because some of them were not cooperative. They had to use personal relations to get the data. The completed questionnaires were collected from 105 heads only. Responses were analyzed by applying appropriate statistical techniques.

Findings

The analysis simplified the process of shaping, validating, and interpreting data, which gave a concrete framework to the study. The analysis also produced useful and significant information from a large amount of data.

Genderwise differences of school leadership effectiveness at secondary level

The researcher developed a box plot to identify outliers in the data. Figure 1 shows that there were three outliers in the data.
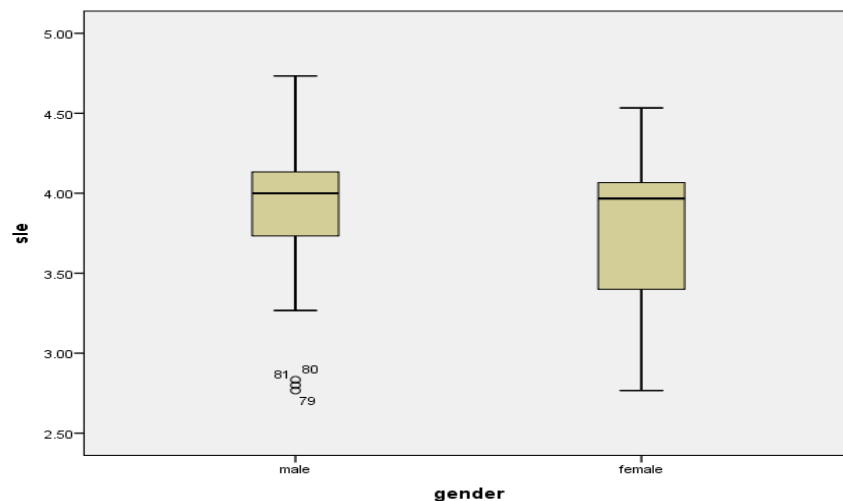

Figure 1: Outliers in the data

Table 1

Comparison of male and female heads school leadership effectiveness at secondary level

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	*df*	*t*	*p*
Anticipation	Male	47	3.9	0.3	100	3.2	0.001
	Female	55	3.5	0.6			
Align	Male	47	4.0	0.4	100	2.7	0.008
	Female	55	3.8	0.6			
Action	Male	47	4.0	0.4	100	2.2	0.027
	Female	55	3.7	0.4			
SLE	Male	47	4.0	0.3	100	3.0	0.003
	Female	55	3.7	0.5			

Table 1 shows that male and female school leaders were significantly different on anticipation, alignment, and action aspects of school leadership effectiveness as the t-values of 3.2, 2.7, and 2.2 were greater than the table value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance, respectively. It also shows that overall significant difference was found between male and female school leaders on the aspect of school leadership effectiveness as t-value of 3.0 was greater than the table value of 1.960. Moreover, the mean score of male heads was 4.0 thereby being greater than that of female heads (3.7) on their school leadership effectiveness. So, male heads scored better than females in their leadership effectiveness. The details of table 1 were also given in the figure 2.
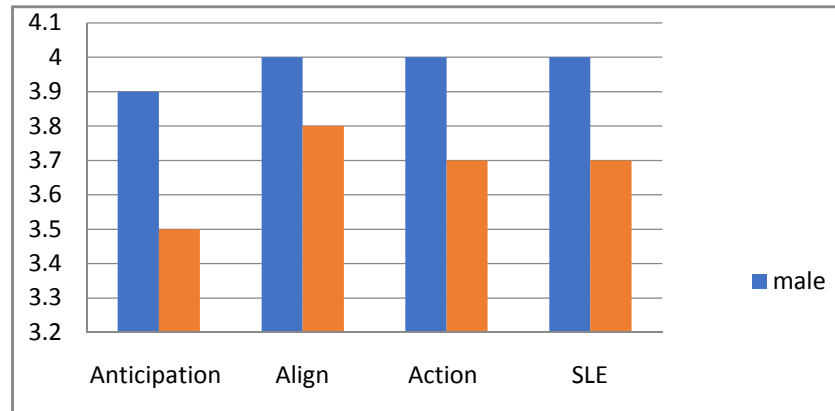
Figure 2: Mean score of male and female on school leadership effectiveness

Area wise differences of school leadership effectiveness at secondary level

There were 102 respondents of whom 46 were from urban and 49 were from rural areas of the district of Sargodha. Their mean scores on SLE were given in Table 2. The following null hypothesis was tested that there is no significant difference between rural and urban school leaders on SLE.

Table 2

Comparison of school leadership effectiveness of heads by location

	Area	N	Mean	SD	*df*	*t*	*p*
	Urban	54					
Anticipation			3.8	0.34	100	0.1	0.88
	Rural	48	3.6	0.41			
	Urban	54	3.47	0.38			
Align					100	0.09	0.93
	Rural	48	3.23	0.5			
	Urban	54	3.65	0.4			
Action					100	0.077	0.94
	Rural	48	3.11	0.46			
	Urban	54	3.9	0.4			
SLE					100	0.048	0.989
	Rural	48	3.8	0.5			

Table 2 shows that urban and rural school leaders were not significantly different on anticipation, alignment, and action aspects of school leadership effectiveness as the t-values of 0.1, 0.09, and 0.077 were less than the table value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance, respectively. No significant difference was found between urban and rural school leaders on school leadership effectiveness as the t-value of 0.048 was less than the table value of 1.960. Moreover, both urban and rural heads' mean scores were found to be 3.9 and 3.8, respectively on overall school leadership effectiveness. The details of table 2 are also given in Figure 3.
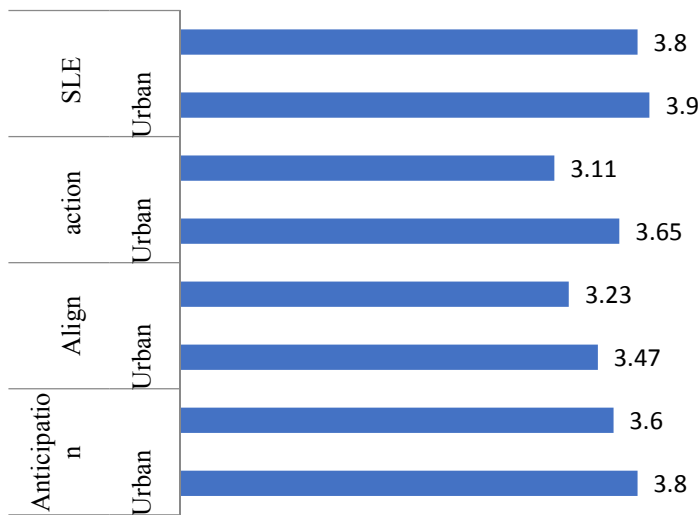
Mean scores of Rural and Urban School Leaders

Figure 3: Mean score of rural and urban on SLE

Conclusions

Based on findings following conclusions were drawn:
(i)   The male heads appeared to be more effective school leaders. The male school leaders scored higher than females on anticipation, alignment, and action aspects of school leadership effectiveness.
(ii) Urban and rural school heads were alike on anticipation, alignment, and action aspects of school leadership effectiveness.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the school leadership effectiveness at the secondary level in the district of Sargodha. The Alpha leadership model (anticipation, alignment and action) is a latest recent model which contained the latest knowledge about the characteristics of effective leadership. This study had used this model as a base to investigate the leadership effectiveness of male and female secondary school heads. It was found that there is significant difference in urban and rural male and female leaders in terms of effectiveness. In addition to that males were found more effective leaders. The results are aligned with the previous studies (Eagly, Karau & Johnson, 1992; Zahid & Gihar, 2012; Tatla & Iqbal, 2012; Salfi, Virk & Hussain, 2014). The above mentioned studies attribute the effective leadership of males, to the male dominance, their having more practical experiences and autocratic attitudes. The contextual factors are always important to discuss, to reach actual conclusions. The anticipation ability of males might be better due to their having more opportunities of socialization from childhood, especially in urban areas. The socialization gives experiences which leads towards strong anticipation. During this process human seek meaning in every action of others and begin to anticipate the others' point of view. This process also develops a rapport and again the action component is much about being proactive. Males being more proactive manage the resources efficiently and keep a distinction between personalization and organizational goals. Therefore the males are found to be more effective leaders. There is more need of providing more socialization opportunities to rural female heads which will consequently improve their leadership skills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, conclusions, and review of literature, this study has the following recommendations:
(i) If these findings hold up with replication, the Government may consider arranging refresher courses and train female school leaders to enhance their effectiveness in the criteria used to define effective leadership.
(ii) Yearly training workshops should be arranged for female heads to further develop their leadership skills in collaboration with male heads to provide for sharing of views and knowledge of leadership.
(iii) Centre wise workshops should also be arranged to train heads of different regions.
(iv) This research study should be replicated at other levels of education.

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