HOW FAR GENDER ROLE IS SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT? CROSS CASE ANALYSIS FROM PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article reports a case study research about the management of successful schools with special emphasis on female leadership, to prove that gender does matter in successful school management. A cross case analysis was conducted with three different school leaderships, especially with regard to their profiles, personal, academic and professional qualifications, their perceptions of successful schools and the initiatives undertaken by them to improve schools. The findings reveal that gender, although significant did not matter to a great extent in successful school management, but what mattered was proper delegation and devolution of authority, firm but caring relationships, appropriate monitoring structures and practices .In this context the present study is focused on the implications of feminine leadership in Pakistan ..

Gender leadership in Pakistan

There is now a growing awareness in educated circles both in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world, in providing equal opportunities both for men and women in educational management. In a patriarchal society like Pakistan, the number of women in higher positions influence female education and therefore it has an effect on enrollment.

If we look at the National Educational Policy between 1998-2010, regarding Education, it will help us to review, how Pakistan has invested in education. The National Educational Policy (1998-2010:25) acknowledges that elementary education is the fundamental right of all, men and women, in all areas of education, irrespective of gender or sect, But in spite of so many changes and reforms, the major issues and challenges of the education system that confronts Pakistan (2001-02) at present are low literacy rate, high drop out at primary level, teacher absenteeism and lack of trained staff especially females, poor management in effective supervision, outdated curriculum and political interference (Shah 2003). The operational fund is too low i.e, (2%) of the total expenditure. With such a low budget allocation, the GDP growth rate of Pakistan is 5.1%. Per capita income is US $492 and fiscal budget is 5%. The annual growth rate is 2.1 per annum (Shah 2003) as illustrated in Appendix A

(www.untref.edu.ar/paksit%EIn.ppt).

Pakistan, like other developing countries has been trying to promote equity and equality in education by trying to maintain gender balance at the classroom, institutional and organizational level. However, gender imbalance is visible at all levels. As a result female leadership is not vividly evident in educational institutions. Although the present government has given high priority towards promoting female leadership, there is a persistent gap between policy and practice.

In Pakistan female teachers teach in the primary and secondary boys' schools but their male counterparts are not allowed to teach in the girls' secondary schools According to Memon (2003: 145) states that there is a generally held opinion in the society that girl schools are managed more effectively than boy's schools. Even in the annual Board exams, girl students tend to perform better than the boys. Owen (1986) states that female managers have all qualities of effective leaders but they are seemed to be interested in the achievement of developmental tasks rather than aspiring for these titles. They are good at creating practices of cohesion, egalitarian, and togetherness. Literature (Heller, 1982 and Owen, 1986) also mentions that females have these qualities. They also possess qualities like integrity, positive thinking, patience, hard work, enthusiasm, listening and organizational skills.

In an attempt to infuse effective leadership and management practices the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) initiated research program to undertake case studies of successful school management in selected countries of Asia. The purpose of this research study was to identify effective management practices. A case study at Lahore was also conducted in this regard.

The Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) as partner institute of [ANTRIEP] Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational planning undertook three case studies in Pakistan. These case studies were conducted in three different school systems: public school, private school and [AKES[Aga Khan Educational Services managed school. This paper shares the cross case analysis of three school leaders of Central School (Male), Royal School(Female) and Mountain School(Male) in order to ascertain if gender matters in leadership.

Profiles of Mountain School, Royal School and Central School

The three schools in this study are distinctively different from each other. They represent different geographical areas and education systems in the complex provision of school education in Pakistan. Of the three, one is an autonomous Government school, another is a community-based school and other is a private school. Though there were some similarities, there were vast differences in the functioning of the school to outweigh the common features.

The profile of the schools

The Mountain School is a girl's school located in a rural town in the Northern Area of Pakistan. It was established in 1953 on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of his Highness, the Aga Khan III and was updated and changed to a girl's school in 1995.It has strength of 408 students from Nursery to class X. The school has 21 teachers with experience ranging from 2 to 26 years. Involvement in the local community is very strong as all teachers live in the town and most leaders are in social and community development work.

The Royal School is located in Lahore, Pakistan under the Department of Education of the Punjab Government. It was established in 1908, and for almost a century it has been tutoring generations of young women to become useful citizens of their country. It has 3200 students studying in the school, college and its University with a combined teaching faculty of 240 members.

The Central School located in Karachi was established in 1981. It is a co educational school that comprises of kindergarten, Junior and Senior sections located within a kilometer of each other. The school follows the British Curriculum (GCE'O' Level).They have 30 classrooms and the total number of students is 1402. The total number of teachers are 71 and their service ranges from 2-13 years.

The table below has the profile of all the three school leaders.

	Mountain School (NA)	Royal School (Lahore)	Central School (Karachi)
General Information	Male 34 years, worked as a lecturer in this school before becoming the principal	Female in her 50s and worked as teacher of the school before becoming the Principal	Male 56 years, working at Karachi University in the International Relations Department.
Education	M.EdIn Education and had done many short Courses of training from Phillips Academy, USA.	Ph.Dn Zoology from King's CollegeLondon and attended several training workshops in management, Finance and Auditing.	Underergraduate degree in Philosophy and a master's degree in Politics from the Same university in the USA. His doctoral work was incomplete but he has an MA in Sociology.
Experience	3 years experience as a head.	More than 20 years	More than 20 years
Job perception	I work as a teacher and Community mobilizer. There are a number of roles that I play. Most important role is to team building and Give respect to teachers. His job satisfaction comes from helping students and teachers to learn and adapt the change	I always look for good opportunities and I am always successful. She said, "As I have faith in family traditions, I learn to take work from others." Importance would be given to Supervision of staff, regularity, punctuality, and supplying resources. Being an administrator I have to look at my staff, so it is basically a teamwork. If I am a failure, it is also the staff that is a failure	Our motto is something from Einstein who says' imagination is more important than knowledge ...My role is to redefine education and to translate it at organizational levels
Perception of successful school	Team work and cohesion amongst the staff, building trust and quality relationships, joint decision making, empowerment and positive community involvement.	A successful school should have qualified staff, good administration, caring and supporting environment, good teaching and learning and cooperation of parents. Staff should strive to rise the quality of their school they have to work day and night to achieve the goal	The school pride's itself on being an anti-conventional school, where structures are less important and where students' holistic development through a broad curriculum is more important. How one differentiate education away from a chore and exam oriented is important
Specific Intervention to improve School	The principal is a role model for the staff. He practically does everything for the schools.		
Principal's time Budget	School hour is from 8.30 am to 1.30 p.m, but I come at least one hour before the beginning of the school time and remain till 3.00 to 4.00 pm. Sometimes I remain till 8.00 pm or even 10 pm if there is a meeting. I would be presented even on Sundays. I would stay at school 50-60 hours on average	Works from 7.30 am 8.00 pm. "There is so much office work......I do not have tome to think about myself. Preference is to teach subjects so that she can be aware of her school needs.	I come around 7:30 a.m, and leave around 3 pm. I do my eight hours however I do work on Saturdays and at time on Sundays. So roughly speaking 50 hours a week I would be putting in this school.

Findings

In the profile of all the three headteachers, they have high qualifications for they have done Masters as well as PhD from foreign Universities. They have ample work experience and what is common to all is their dedication and commitment to their respective institutions. All three put in more time than allocated by the schools. They are clear in their vision of lifting their respective schools to greater heights.

An important discovery is the fact that they all teach,inspite of being in the management. The female headteacher of Royal School is very authoritative and she attributes qualities belonging to a zamindari (landed property) family where she says, "We have a habit, kind of dominating". So in comparison to the other two males, she stands on an equal footing and gender parity as well.

Principals of successful schools are dynamic and well educated individuals with a strong commitment to the school and to their profession chosen. The finding here is that the principal definitely 'makes a difference' in the school. In all cases the principals were found to be dedicated people who had gone to great lengths to get a sound education themselves (two had masters degrees and one a PhD) before becoming a principal. Though their qualifications were not always in teacher education (only Mountain School demonstrated that) it seems that postgraduate programs might be important for producing the kind of openness, thoughtfulness and confidence that a person needs to be an effective principal.

Perhaps the matter of commitment is related to the background knowledge of the principal; if a person is not sure of their knowledge then they may not be able to generate the level of commitment required to be an effective principal. Commitment was demonstrated in various ways but most clearly in the amount of hours per week that the principal devoted to working for the school, the community or the profession. They all worked long hours and were involved in a wide range of diverse activities both inside and outside the school. For example, in Mountain School the principal puts in many hours as a community educational leader outside the school and in Central School the principal has been very influential at the level of the National Government to improve school education in Pakistan. In the case of the principal of Royal School she attributes her staying late in school to the fact that she has been given a home within the school precincts so it was not difficult for her to put in the extra hours. This was a house donated by the Chief Justice of Pakistan for the current Principal of the school and as evidenced it played a significant part in her commitment. In the case of Royal School the principal has been very active in envisioning, planning and executing new courses in the school such as introduction of Computers at the school and College level. Clearly, there are issues here about the recruitment and education of principals for successful schools.Though further research may be necessary, to explore the possible connections between a principal's level of education and commitment to their work.

Shared responsibility and accountability for the management of the school is evident in successful schools. In all cases we found that the principals delegated significant responsibility to others in the school e.g. heads of department, coordinator etc. and ensured that accountability accompanied the delegation of responsibility. This produced a sense of shared responsibility for the outcomes of the school by empowering others to make decisions and take appropriate actions, though always within a framework or a set of guidelines provided by the principal. The principals did not abdicate their responsibility but they shared it and then ensured that those given delegated responsibility would be accountable for their decisions and actions. Merit and skill not gender, seem to influence the kind of leadership and implications on their respective schools. However the implications of a

female successful headteacher lead to a constant demand on the school to take more admissions to the extent the school had to accommodate 80 to 90 students in one class. Farah (1999) based on her research (Farah et al.1996) points out that when a local girl became a teacher presenting a possibility of employment after schooling, the enrollment of girls increased. If one teacher can make a difference one can imagine what female leadership will do to transform the society for a headteacher can impact on a larger scale than a teacher. This is embedded in the typical patriarchal culture of many developing countries such as Pakistan,India, Bangle Desh where the female headteacher is preferred than a male head in educational institutions.

Successful schools have a high degree of autonomy. Whilst the degree of autonomy varied across the schools and in specific areas for e.g. in financial management in particular, it was evident that all principals were involved in school-based management and had power devolved to them. Whilst in Central School the principal owned the school and therefore had complete autonomy, in Royal School the school had been granted autonomy by the Government of Punjab and is an 'autonomous government school'. In Mountain School, the school was clearly in charge of most of its own affairs except for financial autonomy. The finding here is that successful schools are a part of decentralized systems of education and have a high degree of autonomy. This finding is consistent with world-wide trends towards decentralization, flattening of bureaucratic structures in education systems and increased focus on school-based management. At the same time it was the dynamic personality of the lady Principal who could forcefully articulate her school's case and manage the budget with foresight that lead to its success. In her interview she clearly indicated that, her family roots are from the landed gentry and so she kind of 'dominates'. She could further motivate her English teacher to manage the responsibility of administrating the school transport affairs and the teacher commented that in her tenure she managed to plug most of the loopholes of corruption and dishonesty, and had saved around seven lakhs and that it was a success.

Effective management of physical resources has a high priority in successful schools. In all cases we found that the management of physical resources is an important role for the principal.It could be said that 'a good school looks good'. Whether it is the proper maintenance of buildings and grounds, adequate classroom space, the provision of libraries and laboratories or simply clean washrooms it seems that successful schools give high priority to these matters. What is important here is that this aspect of a school is highly visible to all concerned, particularly parents who make decisions about which school to send their children to (in Royal School the imposing architecture is an important part of the tradition of the school which parents find so attractive). Interestingly, any plans or actual improvements in physical resources such as relocating to new premises (Central School) or building a boundary wall (Mountain School) sends a strong, visible message both inside and outside the school that this school is successful. As it is clearly evident that the gender of the three principals did not play a significant part and each one in his/her own right was successful in achieving sizable resources for their respective schools. However, the implications of female leadership is evident in the construction of an overarching bridge for students to cross over, saving them from traffic hazards that made parents appreciate her care and concern, further boosting the image of the school.

Teacher management and the management of pedagogy is an important focus in successful schools. There is a clear and sustained focus on teaching and

learning in all three cases and the principals were very much involved in it. Whilst the nature of the principals' involvement varied considerably from Mountain School, where the principal was very much 'hands-on' in conducting workshops for teachers. In central School where he was more concerned with the philosophy of the school, Royal School could inspire an English teacher to continue teaching effectively from the past fifty years.They all demonstrated a strong interest in what was happening in classrooms on a daily basis, with a particular concern for student achievement in external examinations as an important indicator of success. In fact, this focus on teaching and learning goes beyond management into the realm of 'pedagogical leadership' (Memon and Bana, in press) which is becoming increasingly recognized as a feature of successful schools around .

In successful schools the principal is in touch with everything happening through very effective communication. In all cases the structures of communication were hierarchical but the nature of the communication was non-hierarchical and personal. The principals did not 'give orders' to be carried out, as it is possible in a hierarchy, but they discussed matters with their staff, students and parents in many ways that allowed diverse views to emerge and would be taken into account in decision making. This form of symmetrical communication results in clearer understanding of meaning than does a 'top-down', hierarchical approach to communication which often results in distortion of meaning through the exercise of power (Habermas, 1984). Gender did not have much bearing in effective communication.

Parents have open access to the principal in successful schools but they do not exert control over the school. It was evident in all cases that the schools viewed parents as important stakeholders and they were given opportunities for regular meetings with the principal and through the principal had access to the teachers, but there was no evidence that, parents were given significant roles in the management of the schools. There was a range of approaches to parental interaction with the schools from Mountain School where the School Management Committee provided a great deal of cooperative assistance to the school, and to Royal School where parental interaction was carefully controlled and Central School where parents were regarded more as a 'part of the problem rather than the solution'. In no case, however, did we find that parents were denied access to the school and particularly when it came to student examination results all schools provided formal mechanisms to enable parents to discuss issues with the teachers. What was consistent was more of effective leadership seen through merit and skills rather than gender.

Successful schools have a broader view of the curriculum than textbooks and classroom learning. In all cases we found that serious efforts were made to relate the in-school learning of students to the reality of their lives outside of school. This was done in various ways such as students being involved in a program to uplift some schools in poor areas in Central school. Educational trips were arranged to visit other schools and communities in Mountain School and extensive involvement in competitions outside the school etc. In Royal School, one of the purposes of the school was seen to be 'getting good proposals for the girls', what could be more relevant to their lives outside of school! This definitely has implications of female leadership on the image of a school for this school was explicitly founded by Queen Mary in 1904 for the daughters of the landed gentry. In the present times the principal has gone through her foresight and vision to, incorporate girls from the rural set up by providing good hostel facilities. Perhaps, the improvement in female literacy can to an extent, can be attributed to the efforts of this Principal. It was interesting to note that, all schools placed limits on the amount of

homework that teachers could give and they coordinated it through a homework policy to ensure that the load was spread as evenly as possible.

1)Successful schools engage in some form of school development or improvement planning. In Mountain School it was quite pronounced and called, the School Action Plan with a focus on school improvement on an annual basis. There was strong evidence of the Whole School Improvement Program (WSIP) as advocated by AKU-IED in Mountain School and this was derived from the principal's extensive education at AKU-IED over a number of years along with his work as a Professional Development Teacher (PDT) at the Professional Development Centre, Northern Area, for two years prior to becoming the principal. In Royal School the planning was mainly to do with budget forecasting to ensure that ample resources continued to be available in the school, and in Central School the plan was a complete relocation of the school to new purpose-built premises enabling expansion of the school. Successful schools plan for their future; they do it in different ways and with different emphases but it is clear that they are not satisfied with success in the present; they are searching for success in the future as well as they have a vision of what that might look like. Gender hardly mattered , what mattered was perseverance and hope.

Two of the schools (Mountain School and Central School) had small classes of 20-30 students but Royal School was quite remarkable in having very large classes up to go and beyond 90 students. Such large classes in a successful school was quite a surprise for the researchers, since it contradicts a lot of other research, which suggests that small class size produces better learning outcomes. There were two factors operating in that school to explain this situation. First, there was very high demand from families in Lahore to send their daughters to that school because of its tradition and reputation; and second, the extraordinary

commitment that teachers were showing in working so hard for the school because of their 'love for the institution'. These factors are very unlikely to be found in many other schools so it is not suggested that such large classes would contribute to successful schools in general. It was the leadership of the principal, her magnetic personality and overall vision that made the difference along with love for their institution.

In Mountain School and Royal School all most all teachers had undergone some form of teacher education, including a significant amount of in-service professional development. This was reflected in the high degree of qualification of the respective headteachers whereas Central School was quite different in that because none of the teachers had a degree in education or even had many opportunities for in-service professional development. Most of them had degrees in other disciplines such as MA.or MSc. and were qualified professionals in areas such as law or journalism but they had not studied education. This clearly reflects the principal's beliefs that, a good teacher is a humane and knowledgeable person first and a teacher second (the principal himself does not have a degree in education) and that teaching can be learnt on the job. Since, he is the owner of the school he has been able to recruit and develop the teachers according to his own beliefs. This was particularly an interesting point given to endless debates around the world about the efficacy of teacher education and moves towards teachers learning in the school context rather than, or in addition to, the university setting i.e. teachers' workplace learning (Retallick, 1999). Irrespective of their qualifications, however, all of the schools expected the teachers to have a caring attitude and a personal rapport with students. In none of the schools corporal punishment was not allowed (even though it is common practice in many Pakistani schools). Once more it proved

merit not gender makes the difference.

In (Royal and Mountain School) the style of teaching was the traditional lecture method, with students sitting in rows, though some attempts were made by teachers to allow student interaction with them. Central School was quite different in that, cooperative learning was the predominant approach used by teachers with students sitting in groups and able to interact with each other. This clearly shows the impact of professional development courses that the principal had undergone at AKU-IED, where cooperative learning is stressed, and the subsequent workshops that he had conducted for teachers in the school.

As evidenced in the findings the personality of the headteacher had a direct bearing on the practices of the schools. But what was significant is that in their own typical styles of leadership given, their respective contexts they were all successful. However, the female headteacher made a difference in raising female literacy for it was due to her leadership many parents were willing to admit their children in her school to the extent that each class had 90 students with five sections of each class, yet the demand to admit more remained constant.

Implications for Policy

Arising from this research we suggest some implications for policy in two areas.

1. Recruitment and training of principals

Postgraduate academic qualifications that provide a broad knowledge of various disciplines, and may or may not include education, should be given higher priority in selection of principals. Principals are often selected on the basis of experience, and while that is not unimportant, greater examples could be given to academic qualifications so that more knowledgeable people will be appointed as principals.

Personal qualities such as commitment, interpersonal communication skills, a caring attitude and leadership ability should be considered important in selection of principals. These qualities are usually regarded as too difficult to assess in the recruitment process though some countries and education systems around the world have developed 'principals' assessment centers' for this very purpose. Additionally, since it is possible to develop those qualities through leadership and management training programs, such programs should be made widely available (even compulsory) for aspiring and practicing principals.

Principals should be carefully selected on merit rather than simply rising to the position through age and seniority in the system.Since the principal for creating successful schools, serious effort should be made to recruit appropriately talented people, and incentives such as housing, financial packages, international travel opportunities such as attending conferences and other benefits should be used to attract good candidates. Once recruited they should have opportunities to participate in formal and workplace learning programs focused on pedagogical leadership and various management strategies.

Conclusion

We found that the person acting as the principal and the *processes* used both played very important parts in our understanding of school success. We went looking for processes and we found that it was the outstanding personal qualities of the people who were the principals that really caught our attention. They were educational leaders, not just managers, who had a vision of a better school, indeed a better world, and they were able to share it and inspire others to join them in pursuing it. Perhaps even more astonishing was the fact that this research proved that gender does not make a difference as far as successful schools are concerned, what matters is the personality of the principal and his/ her leadership and management practices.

Our tentative answer to the research question, is that effective management processes and strategies are necessary, but not sufficient condition for school success. Management strategies and techniques are important but perhaps it is just as important to have the right people in the management of schools, not necessarily gender. Of course defining and selecting the right people are problematic issues though we would suggest that qualities such as commitment, caring, openness, tolerance, vision and a broad education are just some of the qualities required. It has often been said that such matters should not be considered because they are too difficult to deal with and that 'people cannot be trained' in such things. If that is taken for granted then perhaps we should not expect significant numbers of successful schools to emerge in future. If this research is telling us anything of value it is that education systems across the region and the world need to pay more attention to the personal qualities of the people who are to be principals of the schools rather than merely focusing on gender.

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