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Author(s):	M. Afzal M. Nadeem Sadia Munawer
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Leadership Styles and Change Dynamics in Public Schools of Pakistan

M. Afzal[1], M. Nadeem[2] and Sadia Munawer[3]

Abstract

Leadership plays a vital role in managing organizations and one of the key issues is managing change. Pakistani public schools are educational organizations which have been subject to top-down change in recent years. The chief actor of change, the public school teacher is assumed to be ignorant of the dynamics of change. This quantitative research was conducted to know the awareness of public school teachers about the dynamics of change and their understanding of school principal's role in change. For this purpose asurvey was conducted withthe teachers of public secondary schools of Punjab in three districts. Multistage sampling technique was used to draw the sample of 135 (male 69 and female 66) teachers. Data was collected through a personally constructed questionnaire to suit the purpose. The Cronbach Alpha (Coefficient of Reliability) of the questionnaire was 0.947. Research findings reveal that public school teachers are fully aware of the importance of change. In fact they are ready to assume the responsibility for second order change. However, the system is not ready to initiate bottom-up change; the leadership role is critical and leadership training is the need of the hour that will gear the system in the desired direction.

Keywords: educational leadership, leadership styles, change, systems approach. Pakistani public schools.

1. Introduction

Kristjánsson (2008) declares "all education is about change, i.e., changed patterns of knowing, feeling conceptualizing and perceiving" Gap is widening throughout the world between traditional approach of educational systems and demands of information technology age of 21st century (Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000). The role of school principals as change agents is emerging throughout the world (Cheng & Wong 1996; Hallinger & Leithwood 1996) as notions of school improvement and school reform are creating their hype. Public education system in Pakistan is also facing the challenge of change, but it is unclear how school leaders will plan to embrace the change.

Fullan (2014) pointed out those school principals are the leading agents of change and they must be aware of how the change might be affecting individuals. Jaffe (2012) revealed that there are two types of change which are first order or second order changes. What has been done in the past is related to the first-order change. It is focused on the existing knowledge and skills for linear and implemented change. On the other

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[1] Afzal is visiting faculty a University of Education, Okara.

[2] Nadeem is Principal Govt Higher Secondary School, Sahiwal.

[3] Sadia is MPhil Education from Minhaj University.

hand, second-order change is new, complex, and nonlinear. Second-order change requires new knowledge and skills as compared to the first-order change.

Other researchers agree with Jaffe (2012) that "school improvement is a journey" (Jackson, 2000; Fullan, 2002) conceptualized in two ways: first order change and second order change, respectively. The first order or top-down change implies the role of policy makers and district administration to provide guidelines and resources for change; the role of principal is more of an instructional supervisor to create an environment that directly influences the quality of instruction and curriculum (Cuban, 1984; 1988; Hallinger, 2003). Principal's initiatives in this direction may include, setting vision, mission and goals, along with strict teacher supervision during curriculum implementation (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger, 2003). The second order or bottom-up change encourages teacher involvement and participation in professional learning communities. Teachers are involved in continuous learning and professional development in an empowering set up, where they share their learning with their colleagues. Instead of direct supervision the focus is upon motivation, capacity building and transformation of the whole school culture (Barth, 1990; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood & Louis, 1999).

Organizational change is very important and practical steps are needed to make things happen. Who will take initiative to bring these changes in the organizations by taking practical steps and who will be the person in charge are the next questions raised in mind. Leadership plays a very important role while managing organizations or addressing the issue of organizational change. Cameron & Quinn (2005) also advocated that an effective leader is a key factor in addressing the issue of organizational change. Senior and Fleming (2006) said in his book "Organizational Change" that leader is a change agent who can take initiative and bring change in an organization. It has been observed recently times that schools face complex and unprecedented challenges, issues and pressures which have changed researchers' understanding of what should be needed for an effective school leader to lead toward organizational change.

Kotter (2006) mentioned that the world has become faster-paced than ever. It is further stated in his book "Leading Change" that it is not possible to slow down the pace of change anytime soon. Leaders of successful organizations have already realized that internal changes must be made in order to cope with the external changes happening in the external environment. Leading change is one of the components of leadership effectiveness (Amagoh, 2009). Leader provides the motivation and communication to subordinates to keep change efforts moving forward. Thereby, successful leadership is required to ensure strong and committed relationships in an organization (Daft, 2005).

Lambert (2003) suggested that leadership is vital to achieve the purposes of the school. Leadership plays a vital role in successful implementation of any change effort

Anderson & Anderson(2010) and Kotter (2006) advocated that leadership is developing a vision of the future together with the necessary strategies for producing the change needed to achieve this vision. Riaz (2010) asserted that a leadership is one of the important and critical factors in enhancing organizational performance due to its stake in key educational decisions. Blanchard (2008) stated that leadership style is a pattern of behaviors which is most important for educational change. According to him effectiveness of leadership style is considered a point of interest for the scholars. It is concluded with the help of many studies that an effective leadership is deeply based on how suitable the situation is for the supposed style of leadership for change (Dutil, 2008).

School principals have many expectations from their subordinates to meet the organizational goals. School leaders must be communicators, instructional leaders, visionaries, facilitators, masters of change, team builders, producers of results, character builders, learner, planner, excellent decision maker and role models for teachers and students. By using the above characteristics, we can check the cause of change both at personal and school level by using the leadership styles (McEwan, 2003; Hoer, 2005; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

Leadership is a practice in which the leader inquiries about the social influence of voluntary participating subordinates (Balyer, 2012); therefore, it is an effective way to reach organizational goals (Bandura, 2011).According to Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) the most effective leader is one who can adjust himself according to the situation in order to create the resonance in the organization.

Goleman (2006) deduced that there are six leadership styles. It is further described that all these styles relate with emotional intelligence. A visionary leader is an inspirational leader, who motivates others to turn shared dreams and goals into reality (Goleman & Boyatzis 2008). Moreover, he/she gives performance feedback and suggestions for improvement, thus becoming an effective leader, who understands subordinates' personal ambitions (Mullar & Turner 2010).

Coaching is founded on the principles of assistance and morale-building which helps developing people for the future. Furthermore, it is the ability to cultivate potential rather than striving for perfection. Thereby, coach is the personality who encourages people in order to reach individual goals within an organization. Democratic leader is one who has no reservations about seeking assistance from subordinates regardless of their place in the chain of command (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2009). Therefore, these are the leaders who aim at building a consensus through participation. An affiliative leader stresses upon developing emotional bonds and harmony among the subordinates (Koman & Wolff, 2008). Pace-setting models depict the authoritarian style, in which leaders set the standards and subordinates are required to be exceptional in whatever they do. Hence, these leaders can expect excellence and self-direction. Commanding style is also authoritative offering no room for delay or

negotiation. Thus commanding leaders are those which give orders and demand immediate compliance from workers (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2009).

Goleman (2006) described that effective leaders are very crucial because they all are known for better emotional intelligence; therefore, components of emotional intelligence; self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, social skills and motivation play an important role in bringing about change. Elias (2006) advocated that leaders can be more effective if they possess and model the social and emotional skills. It is further stated that top-down leadership is never effective in the fast-paced world due to their martial attitude.

1.2. Purpose of the study

This research gives a complete picture of leadership styles and their relationship with factors affecting organizational change in Pakistani public schools, such as personal management, learning, team building, stakeholders' cooperation, planning, budget and resources, overcoming resistance, decision making and vision building. The study at hand is conducted to explore and describe that which type of leadership style is more effective for change.

1.3. Research Questions

The following are the research questions of the study:

1. What are the dominant personal characteristics of school principals as perceived by school teachers?
2. What are the school principals' leadership styles as perceived by the teachers?
3. What are teachers' perceptions about the need for change in Pakistani schools?
4. What are the most effective means of brining change in Pakistani schools?
5. What is the relationship between leadership style and organizational factors influencing educational change in public schools of Pakistan?

2. Methodology

This study is co-relational in nature and survey method was used to conduct the study. The accessible population of the study consisted of the public school teachers of the Punjab province. Multistage sampling technique was used to draw the sample of 135 (male 69 and female 66) teachers. Out of nine three districts of Punjab, Sahiwal, Okara and Lahore, were conveniently selected. From each district four schools, including two boys and two girls' schools were purposively selected befitting the research criterion. The inclusion criterion for each school was minimum 10 teachers teaching at the secondary level. One boys' and one girls' school, and one urban and one

rural school were selected from each district to ensure adequateness and representation of the population. All teachers in the selected schools befitting the inclusion criteria were approached. 200 questionnaires were distributed, but we received only 135 questionnaires, which were completely filled. The response rate was high due to personal data collection. All practical ethics for confidentiality and privacy of the data were duly observed.

Data was collected through self-constructed questionnaire to suit the purpose of knowing various organizational factors affecting leadership and change in public schools of Pakistan. The questionnaire comprised five sections, the first collected demographic information, the second collected perceptions about leadership behaviors of school principals; the third collected perceptions about leadership style of school principals; the fourth collected the reasons of failure in change grounded in leadership failure, and the fifth gathered opinions about the reasons of failure in change grounded in systems failure (*See Appendix A*). The Cronbach Alpha (Coefficient of Reliability) of the questionnaire was 0.947.

3. Results

The findings drawn on the basis of data analysis are as under:

Table 1
Gender wise distribution of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	69	51.1
Female	66	48.9
Total	135	100

The above table shows that sample of the study consisted of 69 (51.1%) male teachers and 66 (48.9%) female teachers.

Furthermore, the research results are discussed below question wise.

Research Question 1: What are the dominant characteristics of school principals as perceived by school teachers?
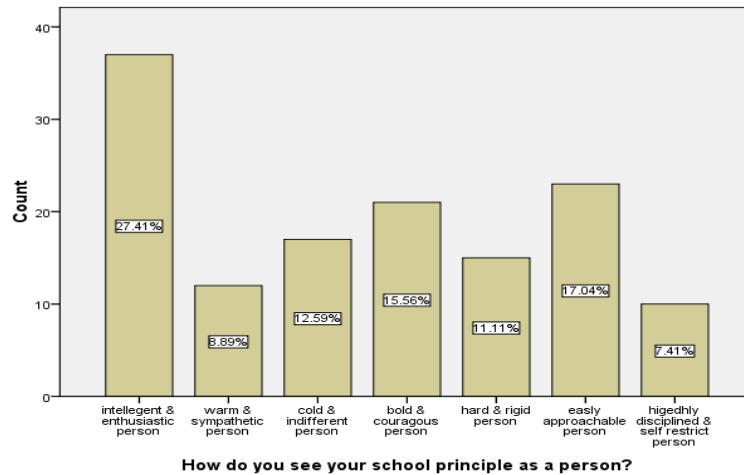
Figure 1. Graph showing the dominant characteristics of school principals as perceived by school teachers

Most of the teachers have observed positive personality traits in their school principals. The graph shown above indicates that 27.41% teachers perceived that their principal was an intelligent and enthusiastic person whowas easily approachable (17.04%); for 15.56% the principal is bold and courageous. 12. 59% viewed their principal as cold and indifferent, 11.11% viewed their principal as a hard and rigid person and 7.41% viewed their principal as highly disciplined and self-restricted person.

Research Question 2: What are the school principals' leadership styles as perceived by the teachers?
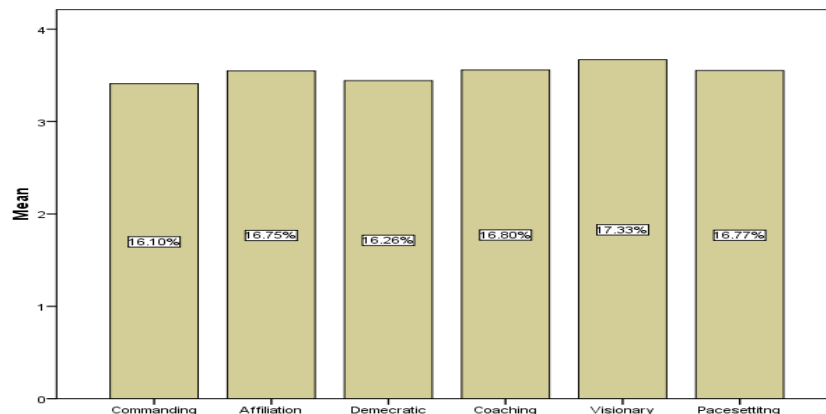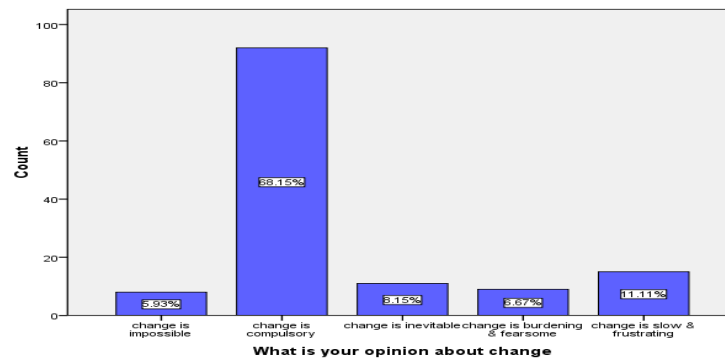

Figure 2. Teacher's perceptions about their principals' leadership style

The graph shows that opinion is highly divided and personal. According to the opinion of respondents, all six styles recommended by Goleman are observed in school principals in Pakistan. No one style has any dominance. It is deduced that Pakistani school leaders have diverse capabilities and styles to offer and teachers can recognize and appreciate the diversity among their leaders.

Research Question 3: What are teachers' perceptions about the need for change in Pakistani schools?

Figure 3. Graph showing the perceptions about need for change as perceived by school teachers in Pakistan

The opinion about the change is shown by the respondents in the graph. It is revealed that most of the respondents (68.93%) have an opinion that change is compulsory while only 5.93% respondents think that change is impossible. Teachers are very well aware of the importance of change in Pakistani schools. They envision that change is the need of the hour.

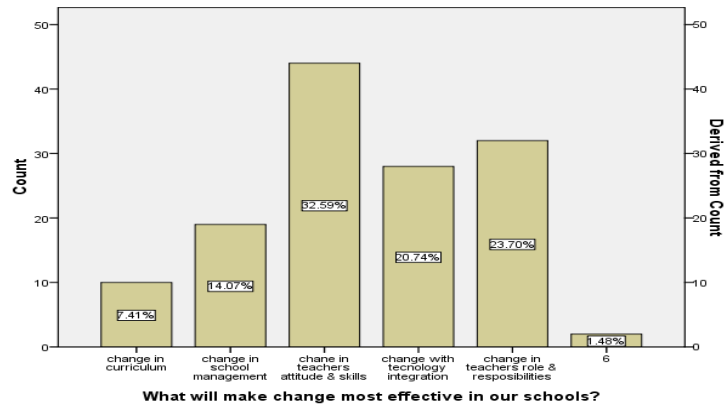**Research Question 4:** What are the most effective means of brining change in Pakistani schools?

Figure 4. Graph showing means of bringing about effective change in Pakistani public schools in Pakistan

The above bar graph illustrates that most of the respondents (32.59%) have pointed out that effective change in the schools is only possible if we change the teachers' attitude and their skills; 23.70% opined that teachers roles and responsibilities must be changed; 20.74% realized the importance of proper technology integration; 14.07 % highlighted the need of change in school management, while only 7.41% respondents consented for change in curriculum. Hence, it is well identified by these responses that teachers are well aware of the importance of their own role, innovation through technology, and improvement in their skills and attitudes.

Question 5: What is the relationship between leadership style and organizational factors influencing educational change in public schools of Pakistan?

A. Teachers' readiness for change. Pearson product moment correlation (rho) was calculated to find out the relationship between leadership style and teachers' readiness for change. It is observed that there exist a significant positive (r=.450, p=.000) correlation between the leadership style of school principals and teachers' readiness for change as perceived by teachers of public secondary schools of Pakistan. The results are depicted in the table below:

Table 2

Relationship of leadership style with readiness of change

	Change	
Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation *r*	Sig. (2-tailed)
	.450**	.000

P**<0.01

B. Relationship of leadership styles with the organizational factors affecting change. Pearson product moment correlation (rho) was calculated to find out

the relationship between the leadership style and organizational factors affecting change. Analysis indicates that commanding style of leadership exerts the most powerful influence on dynamics of change in school. It is the single most determining factor of what will happen in school. i.e. personal management (r=.559, p=.000); lifelong learning (r=.660, p=.000), team building (r=.548, p=.000); stakeholder cooperation (r=.414, p=.000); effective planning (r=.479, p=.000); allocation of budget and recourses (r=.536, p=.000); decision making (r=.617, p=.000); overcoming resistance (r=.577, p=.000), and vision building (r=.667, p=.000).

Other styles such as coaching and visionary leadership styles are also positively and significantly correlated with the factors of change but this relationship varies from weak to moderate. Lifelong learning is the only factor which is significantly influenced by all leadership styles; still the most dominating influence is that of commanding leadership style, meaning that lifelong learning can be fostered only through commanding and pacesetting dissonant styles of leadership. Systemic change is the most challenged by commanding style of leadership. Other factors influenced by leadership styles are overcoming resistance and vision building.

Table 3
Relationship of leadership styles with organizational factors of affecting change

	Commanding	Affiliation	Democratic	Coaching	Visionary	Pace Setting
Personal Management	**.559**	**.309**	.207	.200	.208	.188
	.000	.000	.016	.020	.016	.029
Life Long Learning	**.660**	**.455**	**.419**	**.384**	**.565**	**.645**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Team Building	**.548**	**.304**	.183	**.272**	.245	.177
	.000	.000	.034	.001	.004	.040
Stakeholder Cooperation	**.414**	**.272**	.199	.138	.129	.091
	.000	.001	.021	.110	.137	.295
Effective Planning	**.479**	**.356**	**.255**	.233	.207	.130
	.000	.000	.003	.006	.016	.132
Allocation of Budget and Recourses	**.536**	**.365**	.178	.210	**.240**	.111
	.000	.000	.039	.015	.005	.200
Decision Making	**.617**	.201	.184	.268	**.306**	.223
	.000	.019	.033	.002	.000	.009
Overcoming Resistance	**.577**	**.314**	**.257**	.217	**.257**	.217
	.000	.000	.003	.012	.003	.012
Vision Building	**.667**	**.295**	**.267**	**.285**	**.329**	.234
	.000	.001	.002	.001	.000	.006

4. Conclusions

Teachers have observed more positive than negative personality characteristics in their school principals. Teachers are aware of the need of hour, i.e. systematic change in Pakistani education system and school management; they also realize the critical importance of leadership role in change. Teachers perceive that change is compulsory and it is only possible with the change of teachers' attitude, their skills and change in teachers' role and responsibilities. All leadership styles have been appreciated and equally acknowledged in their school principals by public school teachers in Pakistan. However, the teachers are still aware of the bureaucratic command and authoritative style and they think that they can be most productive under these styles only.

The results of the study also demonstrate that systems change in Pakistani public schools is significantly influenced by leadership styles of school principals and Goleman's leadership styles are useful in interpreting the dynamics of this influence. Analysis indicates that commanding style of leadership would be the most powerful influence on dynamics of change in school. Other influencing styles are affiliative and visionary.

The study has also pointed out some critical organizational factors not reinforcing teacher empowerment and thus limiting the opportunities for educational change in public secondary schools in Pakistan. These factors are poor capacity of vision building of teachers, lack of initiatives for lifelong learning, lack of capacity to overcome resistance, and lack of ability to secure necessary resources needed for change.

5. Discussion

There exists a significant positive correlation between leadership styles and change. Teachers perceive that change is compulsory and it is only possible after changing the teachers' attitude, their skills and change in teachers' role and responsibilities; these results are supported by other researchers as well such as Evans (2011). Although, it is ascertained by teachers that educational change is only possible with effective leadership (Hoffman, Bynum, Piccolo, & Sutton, 2011), they find the trigger of change not in school leaders but in themselves. Teachers are willing to change their attitude but neither system nor leaders are well prepared to gear that change. Teachers are dissonant instead of resonant, therefore unable to create a culture for change. The results suggest that teacher training is an absolute necessity, but needed more is the leadership training to plan and initiate systemic change in Pakistani public schools.

The dominant style identified as barrier to change is the dissonant (Goleman, 2006) commanding style, which is seen as a huge barrier in fulfilling personal and organizational dreams in school, especially lifelong learning and vision building. It is unfortunate that the leaders are commanding but not pace setting. They only command but hardly ever direct or set pace for achievement of the desired goals. Most of the

teachers are young and freshly educated, aware of the modern needs of management, but their principals belong to an old school of thought. This mismatch embitters the relationship further. The generational gap also represents the knowledge gap and calls for change in recruitment, selection and training of the school principals, which should be need and context based suiting cultural and technological needs of the school.

Naicker and Mestry (2011) advocated that the role of school leader as facilitator, mediator, coach, decision maker and planner necessitates collegial school atmosphere which harbingers change. An affiliative and visionary leadership is most actively sought in public schools followed by coaching and democratic styles. A visionary leadership is needed to set goals for active problem solving and affiliative style is needed to bring stakeholder satisfaction and jell school staff into a team. Surprisingly, democratic style is not celebrated here, showing that teachers are now better educated and well aware of the components of democracy rather than idolizing democracy as an ideal.

6. Implications for School Leaders

Furthermore, Goleman's leadership styles have a significant effect on teachers' perception about change. It may be stated that leadership styles have a strong effect on the process of change. The results show that school teachers are quite confused about the exact role of leadership in exercising improvement and change in schools. The teachers witness their principal's capability of displaying all styles, dissonant and resonant, but the correlations values isolate the commanding style as a singular model exercising influence over change (See Table no 5). Leadership in schools is still bureaucratic, exercising more positive influence than negative. This could be an important step toward change. However, whether or not this change materializes to reap true fruits of democracy and leadership will depend upon future direction taken by policy makers, i.e., how district administrators empower the school staff, both the principals and teachers, to take responsibility of change and improvement in their schools.

The school leadership is weak in facing resistance from above and below; they have little role in vision building and planning for school improvement; they act like middle man taking orders from one side and passing on to others without seeking their possible personal input into it. It reflects that first order change is at full bloom in Pakistani public schools. School Principals should distill the values and hopes and needs of teachers into a vision, and then encourage and empower followers to pursue that vision. They should conceive leadership as helping people to create a common vision and then to continuously pursue that vision until it's realized.

Highly advanced concepts of leadership and systems change were tested through this research. Leadership style can have profound effects on an organization

and its staff members and can determine whether the organization is effective or not. School teachers are perceptive and appreciative of the highly resonant styles of leadership, visionary, affiliative and coaching. Therefore, school principals need to be more trusting of their teachers and empower them for planning improvement and change for future. When teachers have realized that change in teacher's attitude and skills are the vital means of change, then what is required is the motivation to gear the change in teacher attitude and skills in the positive direction. In action planning and research, Pakistani school teachers are ready for second order change. So it is the time to initiate change in teacher's attitude through education and training.

7. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research may also be conducted at the same topic in the qualitative perspective to get a clearer and more thorough understanding of the leadership styles and their impact on organizational change.

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