

**Leadership Behaviour in High- Performing
Government Boys Secondary Schools in Quetta:
A Grounded Theory Analysis**

Waheed Bahadur
University of Balochistan, Pakistan
zehri_waheed@yahoo.com

Amir Bano
University of Balochistan, Pakistan
amir_bano@yahoo.com

Zarina Waheed
SBK Women's University, Pakistan
zarinarashid4@yahoo.com

Abdul Wahab
University of Balochistan, Pakistan
abdulwahabbadani@gmail.com

Abstract

The performance of schools is highly dependent on the leadership of school heads, and, flexible leaders accelerate school performance. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine leadership behavior in selected boys' secondary schools that are performing well. Based on multiple-case study design, four high-performing schools from Quetta were selected as sites. Collectively, four principals, four vice-principals and purposively selected sixteen teachers constituted the sample of the study. The data were collected from semi-structured interviews. For the data analysis, the study

relied on grounded theory approach through open-coding, axial coding and selective coding. The findings revealed that the school principals possessed different leadership behaviors, such as change-oriented, relation-oriented and task-oriented behaviors. Moreover, different leadership behaviors contribute to school performance. The implications of the study, recommendations and suggestion are also discussed.

Keywords: change-oriented, high-performing schools, relation-oriented, secondary schools, task-oriented

Introduction

Leaders have the ability to influence, convince and motivate school members to achieve school goals. As a leader of a school, one performs multiple roles in order to be ready and adaptive for all kinds of situations. One has to work as a marshal of a troop, as a friend, as a guardian, as well as a guide and mentor (Boonla & Treputtharat, 2014). In other words, the success and improvement of school performance largely depends on how leaders lead the schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). On basis of the importance of leadership in school performance, various countries around the world have initiated large-scale projects to document the best practices and behavior of school leaders that are instrumental to school success (Crum & Sherman, 2008; Harris, Zhao, & Caldwell, 2009; Sanzo, Sherman, & Clayton, 2011). However, in Pakistan, the researchers and practitioners are less enthusiastic towards this instrumental aspect. For example, school leadership has been highlighted narrowly in National Education Policy 2009 (see,

Ministry of Education Pakistan, 2009) and same is the case with large-scale studies (ASER-Pakistan, 2015). On the other hand, school leadership in Pakistan has been criticised in terms of low quality and lack of leadership competencies required for the leaders of 21st Century (Khan, 2013; Shah, Sultana, Hassain, & Ali, 2011).

There are schools in Quetta as well as in other parts of Pakistan that are performing well due to competent and quality leaders. Nevertheless, due to lack of in-depth studies, their best practices, behaviours and contributions are not shared with others. Thus, there is a decisive need to conduct in-depth studies on school leadership that are performing well. According to the researcher's knowledge, there are a handful of studies on leadership behaviours of school principals in Pakistan in general and in Balochistan in particular. Among the available studies, many are done in business organisations (Chaudhry, Javed, & Sabir, 2012; Ghulam, Javed, Ajmal, & Naveed, 2012; Tipu, Ryan, & Fantazy, 2012), or in countries other than Pakistan (Crum & Sherman, 2008; Crum, Sherman, & Myran, 2009; Mulford et al., 2008). The aim of this study is to explore leadership behaviour in selected high-performing government Boys' Secondary High Schools (GBHS) in Quetta, Balochistan through in-depth qualitative approach. Following were the research questions of the study:

1. What are the perceptions of schoolteachers and vice-principals about their principals' leadership behaviour in selected high-performing GBHS in Quetta?
2. What are the perceptions of school principals about their leadership behaviour in selected high-performing GBHS in Quetta?

3. How does leadership behaviour contribute to the performance of selected high-performing GBHS in Quetta?

Leadership behaviour taxonomies and theoretical paradigms

The first attempt to classify leadership behaviour was reported in Ohio State University in 1940s where Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was constructed. The leadership behaviour taxonomy consisted of two categories as initiating structure, and consideration (Lussier & Achua, 2010). After these studies, different categories with two opposite sets of leadership behaviours were proposed. For instance, production-centred and employee-centred leadership (Likert, 1961) and instrumental and supportive leadership (House, 1971) (as cited in Yukl 2012, p. 67). However, these categorisations missed the change-focused behaviour of the leader. Globalisation and technology advancements as well as diversity at the work place have made the environment of organisations turbulent and uncertain; therefore, every leader from any organisation, including schools, needs to be ready for change (Mulford, 2008). Consequently, leaders need to adapt change-oriented leadership behaviours in order to make their schools successful.

According to Ekvall and Arvonen (1991), the change-oriented leadership behaviour is focused on creativity, innovation and risk taking. They further suggest that a leader in order to be successful should consider tasks, relations and change-oriented behaviours in their practices. This tri-oriented leadership behaviour orientation was further elaborated and tested by Yukl (2004, 2012). He named this theory as tridimensional theory of leadership. According to this

theory, for the success and effectiveness of organisations, leaders need to be flexible and they should have capability to change their behaviours according to needs and situations. Moreover, the behaviours proposed by many well-known theories such as transformational, path-goal and charismatic are also included in this theory (Yukl, 2004).

According to tri-dimensional theory of leadership, the leaders' multiple and flexible behaviours can be grouped into three dimension or orientations: relation-oriented leadership behaviour, task-oriented leadership behaviour and change-oriented leadership behaviour. This behaviour taxonomy is comprehensive, clear, distinct and observable (Yukl, 2004, 2012).

The relation-oriented leadership behaviour is focused on developing good and strong bonds with school members and other stakeholders in order to get the organization business done. It includes: (a) supporting, (b) developing, (c) recognising, (d) empowering.

According to Yukl (2012), the task- oriented leadership behaviour is “ to ensure that people, equipment, and other resources are used in an efficient way to accomplish the mission of a group or organisation” (p. 69).

Task-oriented leadership behaviour includes:

- a) Short-term planning,
- b) clarifying task objectives and role expectations,
- c) monitoring operations and performance,
- d) Problem solving.

Change-oriented leadership behaviours are used to increase innovation, collective learning and adaptation to external changes among organizational members. It involves:

- a. monitoring the external environment
- b. envisioning the change
- c. encouraging innovation and creativity
- d. taking risks
- e. facilitating collective learning.

Hence, for this study, the leadership behaviours of school leaders were explored based on Yukl's (2002, 2004) theory. This theory is based on the contingent model of leadership as it focuses on adaptive and flexible leadership behaviours.

Theoretical framework

Yukl's (2004) and Yukl, Gordon, and Taber (2002) theory is a wide-ranging theory on leadership behavior. It includes the behaviors and propositions proposed by the majority of theories and models of leadership behaviors, for example, charismatic, transformational, path-goal and change-oriented (Yukl, 2004). This theory provides effective behavior categories, where the behaviors in each type of leadership category are clear and observable (Yukl, 2004; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). More importantly, it explains the collective leadership and managerial behaviors of leaders in any organization (Gil, Rico, Alcover, & Barrasa, 2005). Although there are limited studies on utilization of tri-dimensional theory of leadership behaviors in school settings (Hussin & Waheed, 2016), this theory is applicable to all types of organizations (Yukl, 2004). This

theory has been employed in business and healthcare organizations (Barrasa, 2003; Gil et al., 2005; Michel, Lyons, & Cho, 2010; Yukl, 2012). Hence, this study explores the types/orientations of leadership behaviors proposed by Yukl's (2004) and Yukl, Gordon, and Taber, (2002) within selected high-performing GBHS in Pakistan. Based on the proposed Yukl's theory, a theoretical framework is designed as given in Figure 1.

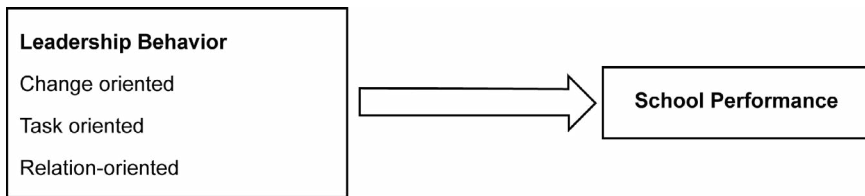


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the study.

Research Design

Qualitative case study design was employed to understand the phenomenon with multiple variables of interest (Merriam, 2009). This study analyzed four cases, which were 'schools'. Therefore, the research design for this study was a multiple-case study (Yin, 2009). Asher (2005) clarifies that a multiple-case study has a limited number of cases starting from two to ten because it is impossible to develop an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon if the cases are larger in number.

Selection of cases

For the selection of cases, the Baluchistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education was contacted where two top

urban boys' schools and two top suburban boys' schools (secondary schools) were selected based on the performance of students in matriculation examination. The principals of all schools were visited and the aim and duration of the study was clarified. The profiles of school principals are presented in table below:

Table 1

Profiles of School Leaders

	Principal in school A (Urban)	Principal in school B (Urban)	Principal in school C (Suburban)	Principal in school D (Suburban)
Age	37 years	39 years	Above 50	55years
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male
Qualification	M.sc and M.Ed. Enrolled in M.Phil.	Form-D and M.Ed. Enrolled in M.Phil.	LLB, Masters in Public Administration,M.Ed.	M.sc, M.Ed
Experience as teachers	10 years	7 years	15 years	15 years
Experience as principals	3 years	3 years	11 years	13 years

Sample

From the four selected schools, one school principal, one vice-principals and four purposively selected teachers from each school were taken making it a sample of 24.

Instrument

Semi-structured interviews were used as instrument for data collection. An interview protocol was developed based on theoretical framework of the study. The interviews were recorded which were then transcribed. The written interviews were taken back to the participants for review and validation. The software ATLAS.ti 7 was

used to organize the data for analysis.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, the grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was employed. This process of coding is mainly based on inductive method and allows generation of a theory or theories from the data. However, it can be used for qualitative studies that do not aim to generate theories as well (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The data analysis, in grounded theory approach is based on three steps: (a) open coding, (b) axial coding, and (c) selective coding. In open coding, the data were coded by reading each sentence from the interviews at least twice for correct understanding and interpretation. In axial coding, the categories and sub-categories were developed by aggregating similar codes under one category. Figure 2 is an example of axial coding. In case of selective coding, the relationships and propositions were established among the main categories through logical reasoning.

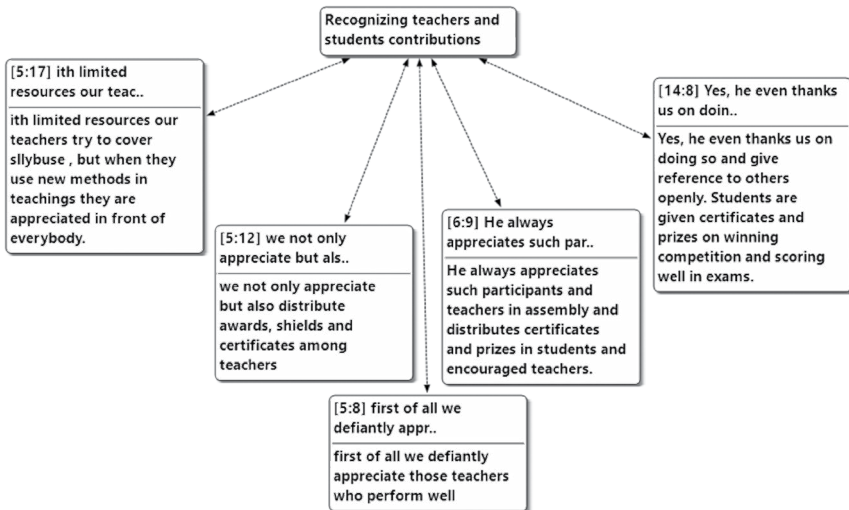


Figure 2. Sample for axial coding using ATLAS.ti 7 network view.

Findings

The findings of this study were in line with the theoretical framework of the study and the three meta-categories of leadership behaviours; relation-oriented, change-oriented and task-oriented were evident in all high performing boys' secondary schools.

Task-oriented leadership behaviour

Data analysis revealed that the main leadership behavior evident that emerged was task-oriented. The school principals in Pakistan are over-burdened with administrative responsibilities; therefore, their focus is more on tasks. Secondly, due to top-down management and bureaucracy, the leaders from the government schools have limited choices other than administrating tasks (Memon, Simkins & Garret, 2000). The task-oriented behaviours, found in the data, are listed in the Figure 3, and are explained in the proceeding paragraphs.

Task-oriented Leadership Behaviours	Extensive Monitoring and Evaluation
	Assigning and Clarifying task, Duties, and Responsibilities
	Using Funds Efficiently

Figure 3. Themes under task-oriented leadership behaviour

The findings showed that the leaders in selected high-performing schools were spending relatively more time on monitoring teaching learning processes. Classroom visits, taking rounds and checking students' progress through their homework, assignments and results were the methods used for monitoring and

evaluation. In addition to this, the leaders also randomly queried students about their teachers and their teaching methodology.

The principal from a school claimed:

“Actually, a school needs a good administrator to check teachers’ and students’ performance regularly... this act assists schools to succeed in the long run.”

Another principal shared:

“I keep observing things personally ... if I find any deficiency; I call the concerned teacher to the office and try to guide him”.

Similarly, the principal from another school had constituted a committee for evaluating and monitoring the progress of students, completion of courses and other school-related matters. While the principal from yet another school affirmed:

“The Vice-Principal and I take rounds on daily basis to see that the required tasks are being carried out.”

Besides this, the leaders from the all selected schools gave clear directions and guidelines to the teachers in order to elucidate their tasks. For this purpose, the teachers were being directly informed about their roles, duties or responsibilities by the principals. Moreover, notices and orders were being issued and regular meetings were being conducted. The excerpts below from the interviews of teachers of all four schools best testify the findings discussed above:

“We receive the plans or information commonly through notices or on order book, but if there is something major then meetings are conducted and things are finalized.”

“We usually issue notices on order book and conduct meetings for big things. There various important matters are discussed and then planned accordingly.”

“In meetings, the responsibilities are distributed among teachers....Distribution of workload is justified equally here.”

“He [principal] calls concerned committee; they sit together and involve all teachers if required for plans and action. We have an order book for small notices and information.”

The government was the main funding or donor agency for all selected schools. One of the schools was receiving annual funds from the federal government, while for the other three, the provincial government was responsible for funding. However, the funds received according to participants, were insufficient to run the school operations. In this regard, a teacher explained:

“Annual budget is almost limited and is for fixed things.”

It was apparent in the data that the principals in selected schools were allocating and using funds wisely and generating funds and donations as well. The principals in all schools were very active in generating resources from different governmental departments, political parties and NGOs. A principal shared:

“Since I have become principal of this school, I have tried to provide maximum possible material resources which assist teaching-learning process.”

While, another teacher explained claimed:

“Many times NGO’s (Non-Governmental Organizations) and government representatives have visited to help our school.

Similarly a teacher illuminated:

“The principal had proposed and got approved some new construction work which is in progress.”

Relation-oriented leadership behaviour

Leaders in high-performing schools develop good interpersonal relationship with the teachers. They involve them in decision-making resulting in building trust and teamwork among themselves. The figure below presents themes that emerged under relation-oriented leadership behavior in selected schools.

Relation-oriented Leadership Behaviours	Establishing friendly and trusting relationship
	Shared decision-making,
	A friendly and trusting relationship with teachers
	Recognizing teachers and students contributions

Figure 4. Themes under relation-oriented leadership behaviour

The principals in selected schools had developed a family-like environment. They treated their teachers like friends and family members and provided support and motivation to them as well as

guided them. A principal SD shared:

“I mostly have young teachers here. I deal with them just like my own kids and I have divided tasks according to their relevant proficiency and on equality basis.”

A teacher expressed:

“The best thing about him [Principal] is that he deals with teachers just like an elder brother.”

Another teacher reflected:

“Our Principal behaves like a brother and personally tries to resolve our issues and problems. He has built a friendly atmosphere.”

The principals from two schools, who were relatively young, had developed a more friendly relationship with their teachers as compared to principals in other schools. The teachers considered that due to their relation-oriented behaviour, they had developed trust and respect in the organization.

One teacher reported:

“He respects teachers. This is what teachers want... He really knows how to make the teachers realize their worth and value for future development, then absolutely he receives much respect and confidence of all staff.”

Shared decision-making was another relation-oriented behaviour evident in the data. A teacher from SD in this regard stated:

“He organizes committees and conducts meetings time to

time as per need. In such a way, he involves everyone in the system.”

While the teachers from three schools reported:

“Principal respects our opinion and therefore we are included in decision-making for any new plans for the progress of the school.”

“Meetings are conducted to discuss and resolve plans and issues with all important advices and those who miss meetings sometimes or want to share any idea in isolation with the principal in privacy. They are welcomed.”

“They arrange meetings with all teachers openly and points are noted on plans whether positive or negative then after discussion the plans and strategies are finalized.”

Moreover, reward and appreciations were also being used as tools to develop and strengthen relationships with the teachers as well as with students by all principals. According to one of the teachers, the principal’s behavior of appreciating and encouraging was a valuable act for teachers and it had developed confidence among students as well as teachers. The principal from the same school shared:

“I appreciate those [teachers] in front of the class ... and also appreciate them in meetings and during assembly by name I distribute certificates for best teacher.”

Another principal said he also distributes best teacher

award annually to the teachers for their performance. This was also confirmed by the teachers, who stated:

“We have the best teacher award annually which is given on good performance.”

Change-oriented leadership

It was evident from the data analysis that leaders in selected schools demonstrated change-oriented leadership behavior too. The themes under change-oriented leadership behavior are listed in Figure 5 given below:

Change-oriented Leadership Behaviours	Showing a Strong Desire and Vision for Change and Improvement
	Encouraging to Use Innovative Teaching Methods and ICTs

Figure 5: Themes under change-oriented leadership behavior

The principals in all schools indicated a strong desire and vision for change and improvement in their schools and wanted to make their schools a living example. One of the teachers declared that the principal had the vision to make the school as one of the best and ideal school in the near future, while the vice-principal of another school claimed:

“He does not only envision making the school as one of the best schools in the province, but one of the best schools in the country.”

Likewise, a principal desired to upgrade his school to inter-college so that the children in the vicinity could get opportunity to receive higher education as going to Quetta city to attend different colleges was a challenge. Similarly, another principal shared:

“The team that I have here is the best among all that I have worked with, but they needed a strong leadership, which they lacked.... I have just achieved 20% of my objectives and have 80% to succeed.”

It could also be manifested from the findings that the principals were trying to introduce new and modern teaching methods and Information Communication Technologies (ICT). A teacher from a school considered the principal as being very innovative. He stated:

“He is always excited in introducing new things and methods”.

For incorporating ICT, the principals tried their level best to provide full functional computer laboratories in their schools. In two schools the computer laboratories were fully functional and the principals ensured the availability of the Internet in their computer labs as well. In one of the schools, the computer laboratory was fully functional; however, due to the earthquake, the building was damaged and a new building was under construction for this purpose. The principal was planning to provide multimedia and overhead projectors for teaching and learning. Nonetheless, in the fourth school, the computers were available only for teachers. However, the principal was trying to get the computers for students as well. As a teacher informed:

“For computer lab they have sent a proposal, so far we just have computer and net in office for teachers’ use only”.

Discussion

Leadership, in order to effect success and performance of schools, needs to be adaptive and multiple-oriented (Mulford, 2008; Yukl, 2004). The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership behaviours in selected high-performing GBHS in Quetta. The framework of this study was based on Yukl’s tri-dimensional leadership behavior which includes task-oriented; relations-oriented; and change-oriented leadership behaviors (Yukl, 2004; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). The three main types of leadership behaviors were found to exist in all schools. Moreover, all behaviors were considered to contribute to the performance of the schools. However, within the framework, the researchers found flexible leadership behaviours in the school context and suitable for the schools in Baluchistan.

The findings of this study are encouraging. First, it showed that if the schools had good and committed heads, they would perform well. No matter what obstacles they faced, they had the courage to accept the challenges and take risks. Secondly, it was evident from the findings that the leaders of these schools were using multiple leadership behaviours and they were not focusing on completion of tasks and work distribution, rather were giving emphasis to relations and change along with tasks. These findings are in line with Yukl’s findings that leaders, in order to improve their organizations, need to demonstrate task-oriented, relation-oriented, and change-oriented leadership behaviours (Yukl, 2004, 2012;

Yukl's (2004); Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). The results are also consistent with another researcher from the field of school education who strongly recommends leaders to use adaptive and multiple leadership behaviours (Mulford, 2008).

The leaders in selected high-performing schools mainly emphasized on the continuous and effective monitoring. It is not surprising, considering the previous researches that have strong emphasis on continuous and effective monitoring process in school success (Hallinger, 2003). It has been declared that one of the in-school factors, which is an obstacle in school performance in Pakistan is the lack of monitoring and supervision inside the schools (Ministry of Education Pakistan, 2013).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that schools were receiving limited and fixed budget annually that was restricted to be used for some specific purposes. The interview participants considered this as one of the main challenges because it was curbing the abilities and vision of the leaders to do something constructive for their schools and students. Indeed, if such competent and well-informed principals are provided autonomy and ample budget, it can bring revolutionary changes in their schools and on the overall education system of Pakistan. Despite these challenges, the findings indicated that the principals from selected high-performing schools were using their limited budget efficiently based on needs and priorities and they were attracting different donor agencies and NGOs for donations and contributions (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008).

Leaders in selected schools developed strong bonds with school members as well as with parents and other school stakeholders.

They developed trusting and friendly relationship with the school members, thus motivating them for change and commitment towards schools (Crum & Sherman, 2008). In addition to this, appreciation, achievements, contributions and commitment to work added as an energetic supplement to develop interest, commitment and hard work among school members. Many researchers (Yukl, 1981; Yukl, Gordon & Taber., 2002) have witnessed an effective increase in the followers' performance by recognizing their effort to achieve organizational goals. Research has shown that teachers are more likely to obey their leaders if they get proper and timely appreciation from them (Nir & Hameiri, 2014). Lastly, the findings revealed that leaders in all schools demonstrate strong change-oriented leadership behaviour. The school principals were appreciated as being active, ambitious, energetic and dedicated, which acts as a triggering factor in school improvement and change (Yukl, 2004).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study contributes to the current literature on school leadership in the context of Pakistan and concludes that task-oriented, change-oriented and relation-oriented are the most important behaviours of leadership in high performing schools of Baluchistan. The findings of this study provide some important implications for MoE as well as Education Department in Baluchistan regarding school improvement. It could help them organize more training programs on leadership considering the three important behavior orientations. In addition, the current school administrators and principals may also use the findings of this study to improve their school systems. Future researchers are recommended to conduct quantitative studies in different settings by including a large sample

size. Moreover, students and parents could also be included in future to get more in-depth and better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

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