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Role of Leadership and Challenges faced by Leadership in Educational Change and Innovation at School Level

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Abstract



Educational change and innovation are essential components of school improvement and responsible for school effectiveness. The research is designed to evaluate the school leaders' role in the implementation of innovation and change in schools. The study objective was also to analyze the challenges faced by the private and govt. school heads in the implementation of innovation and change in schools. Quantitative approach was used and all the school heads of Lahore city were considered as study population. The research sample is comprised of 50 school heads (25 public, 25 private) and selected by convenient method of sampling. Self developed structured questionnaire was used to collect the responses of school heads. Data were analyzed by computing mean and standard deviation. Difference in opinion was tested by using independent sample t-test. Results of the study indicate that school leaders' role plays an important role in bringing educational change and innovation. The results also indicate that school leaders face various challenges in the implementation of innovation and change in school. Further, the results show that the difference in the role of public and private school heads is not statistically significant. This study recommended that school leaders should play their role with passion through understand the importance of bringing change and innovation in school and prepare a comprehensive plan to cope the challenges they face in the implementation of educational change and innovation. This will in turn bring the improved school performance and will make the school effective.

Keywords: School Leader, Educational Change & Innovation, School Improvement, School Effectiveness.

Introduction

Helping the individuals in performing the assigned tasks successfully is called leadership (Alagheband, 2001). Leadership means to guide others' activities towards accomplishing the specified objectives. It is the procedure of influencing the individuals so that their hard work is focused on attaining the goals of the organization (Meraku, 2017). School leaders provide coaching, gain knowledge of extra orders and give fine schooling to the whole students. The professionals of education don't forget that the leader is a riding strength and provides administrative support and brings improvements in the education of school students (Mirkamali, 1995). Creative leaders build trust in their fellows, work as members of the team and such leaders are supported fully supported in their roles, these leader take all the initiatives to ensure goals are achieved (Cunniff, 2013). Change is concerned to learn the new practices and brings improvements in the previous practices. Change and innovation is a continuous process and leaders follow the educational change and innovation to achieve the results effectively in aspect of students' achievement and teachers' professional development. Reason is that teachers are the actual implementers of the new concepts and their training implement change and innovation in a successful way (Shen, 2008). Successful leaders of the school are important to workable educational improvements. Eventually, educationalists have the opinion that principals have to be innovative and change leaders if they want to achieve the results in a better way (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000).

Leadership is the procedure of influencing the individuals and leader's hard work is focused on attaining the goals of the organization. Leadership is a procedure of public inspiration in which the leader searches for the voluntary contribution of assistants to grasp the goals of the organization. A person who delegates or inspires people to carry out definite objectives is called a leader. Leader is an individual who inspires people and groups within the organization, helps them in defining objectives and leads them towards accomplishing these goals (Meraku, 2017). In the new era, organizations need good leaders who realize the difficulties of the quickly changing universal environment.

Harris (2004) describes that leadership has been an area of importance in institutions for many years. The importance of leadership has inflamed attention in the areas like education. A momentous quantity of research has been done to conclude the merits that made a successful and effective leader. Preliminary studies of leadership focused on studying individuality of leaders in an endeavor to determine which traits and proficiencies need leaders to be successful but this study adds new knowledge regarding the responsibility of school heads for innovation and change in schools (Yukl, 2006). The leader performs a vital role in the direction and track of the institute that sets the goals of the institution and people act in accordance with. So, a proper leadership style inspires and guarantees the wealth and financial progress of the institution and staff (Meraku, 2017). A leader needs to produce new ideas for the development, value and establishment of the institution.

Wallance (2002) advised that an effective leader adopts changes and implements the innovative ideas in the school. The leader is considered as agent of the change and brings changes in an organization through taking initiative (Senior and Fleming, 2006). Basically, purpose of change is to bring improvements in the existing practices and achieves the results in an effective way. Process of change follows the process of need analysis, planning, implementation of decided plan and evaluation of the whole change process. In this process, role of school leader is very important because the support of leader helps to achieve the results in an effective way and enables to contribute the efforts of teachers in the whole implementation process of change (Shen, 2008).

Generally, innovation means creating or redesigning goods and procedures for the benefits of an association. Innovation in the field of education is also focused on the creation of optimistic changes but according to this situation, these changes will advantage the classrooms and schools. School innovation depends on the behaviors and actions of those who working in the schools and they must be helpful and hopeful towards the change. A principal should provide motivation and reinforcement to the teachers and students (Rashid, Hussain & Nadeem, 2018). Innovative leaders use their expertise and practical experiences to achieve the organizational goals in a better way. They use the creative ideas and involve the team members in the whole process (Sauphayana, 2021). But school leaders have to face the different challenges in the implementation of educational change and innovation such as lack of teachers' training and knowledge, insufficient provision of human and material resources, negative attitude of teachers and less knowledge of school leaders about new change and innovation (Tang, Lu & Hallinger, 2014). So change and innovation in school are based on students' learning and teachers' learning. Teachers' learning depends on learning new teaching techniques, classroom management skills and assessment procedures. All are responsible for school improvement and role of school principal is important to effectively implement the process of change and innovation in school. So this study adds the contribution to describe the role of school leaders in the favor of change and innovation and also highlights the challenges effecting on educational change and innovation.

Research Questions of the Study

1. What is the head's role in the implementation of innovation and change in school?
2. What challenges head face during implementation of innovation and change in school?
3. Is there any difference in the private and public school heads' role in the implementation of innovation and change in school?

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the private and public school heads' roles in the implementation of innovation and change in school.

Methodology

Positivist research paradigm was used in this study because factual knowledge can be obtained by using scientific methods and reality may be discovered by the natural methods of observation (Cohen et al., 2007). Research approach was quantitative and it follows the numerical methods to understand

the phenomena. Population of the study was comprised of all the public and private school heads of Lahore city. Convenient method of sampling was used for selection of schools as sample and 50 school heads in which 25 were drawn from public sector and 25 from private sector by convenient method of sampling. Tool of research was structured questionnaire and it comprised of 29 statements ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Questionnaire statements were linked with the role of school leaders and the challenges school heads face in the implementation of innovation and change in schools. Researcher collected the data personally and the data has been analyzed through mean, standards deviation, and independent sample t-test.

Data Analysis

This section presents the data into tabular form and interpretation of each table is also described as:

Table 1

All statements related to mean and standard deviation

No.	Statements	M	SD
1	Role of head is to ensure an orderly and disciplined environment.	4.70	.463
2	Role of head is very important for educational change and innovation.	4.58	.499
3	Head’s relevant training to the change encourages for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.58	.499
4	The role of head is to develop and manage educational change and innovation.	4.54	.613
5	Head is a change agent who can take initiative to bring change in school.	4.52	.614
6	Head’s will power encourages for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.52	.735
7	Insufficient financial resources are a challenge for head in the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.52	.646
8	Head’s aims related to school’s development encourage for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.50	.505
9	Head’s positive personal believes encourage for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.44	.501
10	Role of head is to support teachers for educational change and innovation.	4.40	.639
11	Head provides guidance to implement the educational change and innovation.	4.40	.606
12	Insufficient teaching staff is a challenge for heads for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.38	.635
13	A head’s most important role is to provide clear and compelling direction for educational change and innovation.	4.36	.631
14	Role of head is to involve parents in educational change and innovation process.	4.32	.868
15	Teacher’s negative personal believes are challenge during the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.32	.587
16	Head’s efficiency and effectiveness help to bring effective change for school.	4.30	.463
17	Head involves teachers in planning the change and innovation for school.	4.22	.932
18	Role of head is to establish goals for school.	4.20	.571
19	Role of head is to communicate with teachers, students, and non-teaching staff for educational change and innovation.	4.18	.919
20	Head uses legitimate power to implement educational change and innovation.	4.18	.825
21	Decision making is a big challenge for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.16	1.113
22	Communication gap with students and parents is a challenge for head in the implementation of educational change and innovation.	4.02	.515
23	Role of head is to support non-teaching staff for educational change and innovation.	3.92	1.066
24	Competitive environment encourages the head for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	3.84	1.076
25	Role of head is to support students for educational change and innovation.	3.74	.487
26	Deficiency of non-teaching staff is a challenge for head for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	3.68	1.151
27	Risk taking encourages the head for the implementation of educational change and innovation.	3.62	1.028
28	Implementation of change and innovation is very complex and challenging for the head of school.	3.48	1.313
29	To create suitable atmosphere within the school by adopting change and innovation is challenging for the head.	3.40	1.498

Above table shows that mean response values of the statements ranges from (4.70 to

4.18) show that heads provide maximum efforts for implementation of educational change and innovation. Mean response value (4.70) of item no. 1 is linked with well established system, (MRV: 4.58) of item no. 2 is about importance of role of school leaders, (MRV: 4.58) of item no. 3 describes the importance of training, (MRV: 4.54) of item no. 4 shows the active role of school leaders, (MRV: 4.52) of item no. 5 is concerned about role of school leader as bringing change in the institution, (MRV: 4.52) of item no. 6 shows the willingness of school leader towards change, (MRV: 4.50) of item no. 8 describes the determination of school head towards change, (MRV: 4.44) of item no. 9 indicates the optimistic believes, (MRV: 4.40) of item no. 10 is concerned about supportive behavior of school leaders, (MRV: 4.40) of item no. 11 is about provision of guidance, (MRV: 4.36) of item no. 13 is about provision of proper direction, (MRV: 4.32) of item no. 14 is about involvement of parents, (MRV: 4.30) of item no. 16 describes the components for valuable change, (MRV: 4.22) of item no. 17 is about involvement of teacher, (MRV: 4.20) of item no. 18 is about formulation of school goals, (MRV: 4.18) of item no. 19 & 20 indicate the participation of teaching & non-teaching staff and legal power of school leader for change and innovation.

Mean response values (3.92 to 3.62) indicate that heads also play a supportive role. (MRV: 3.84) item no. 24 is about role of competing surroundings, (MRV: 3.74) of item no. 25 is concerned about involvement of head for students, (MRV: 3.62) of item no. 27 shows that daring behavior of head is responsible for educational change and innovation.

School leader's supportive role also influenced by different types of challenges: (MRV: 3.48) of item no. 28 shows that application of change is complex, (MRV: 4.52) of item no. 7 is concerned about less availability of funds, (MRV: 4.38) of item no. 12 describes the less availability of teaching staff, (MRV: 4.32) of item no. is about involvement of parents, (MRV: 4.16) of item no. 21 discusses the ability of taking decisions by head, (MRV: 4.02) of item no. 22 identifies the conversation gap, (MRV: 3.68) shows the less availability of non-teaching staff, and (MRV:3.40) of item no. 29 is concerned about developing of comfortable situation by school leader also a major hurdle.

Table 2

Comparison of public and private school heads' opinions about educational change and innovation

Variable	Sector	N	M	SD	t	Df	p
Role of leaders in educational change and innovation	Public	25	4.2840	.40382	-.191	46.406	.850
	Private	25	4.3040	.33476			

Table 2 shows that the difference in the role of public and private school heads is not statistically significant because *t-value* is -.191 and *P-value* is greater than the predefined significance value which is 0.05. The corresponding value of mean for public schools is 4.28 and value of mean for private schools is 4.30.

Discussion

Results of the study indicate that school leaders' role plays an important role in bringing educational change and innovation. The results also indicate that school leaders face various challenges in the implementation of innovation and change in school. Further, the results show that the difference in the role of public and private school heads is not statistically significant. This study recommended that school leaders should play their role with passion through understanding the importance of bringing change and innovation in school and prepare a comprehensive plan to cope the challenges they face in the implementation of educational change and innovation. This will in turn bring the improved school performance and will make the school effective. The school leader in fact contributes in the improved performance of the students through capacity building of teachers and staff. The current study findings are valuable contribution in the existing literature of the field. The findings are supported by the international literature of the field (Fullan, 2007; Hallinger, 2010). Another study conducted by Owusu-Agyeman (2019) provides support to the role of leaders regarding the provision of information and participation of faculty members in the implementation of change and innovation process. This is also in line with current study conclusions. As there is no statistically significant difference in the role of public and private school heads, which indicates role of the school head is important irrespective of the sector.

Conclusion

Conclusion of the study is that following factors contribute a lot in educational change and innovation: competitive environment, head's willpower & aims, risk-taking, positive personal beliefs, encouragement for the implementation of educational change and innovation. But on the other side, school leaders had to face different types of challenges in successfully implementation of educational change and innovation, these challenges include decision-making, school's culture, barriers by the government, teacher's negative personal beliefs, insufficient financial resources, communication gap with students and less involvement of parents. It was also concluded that no difference was found between the role of public and private school leaders in implementation of educational change and innovation.

Recommendations of the Study

1. Head should provide understandable and convincing directions for educational change and innovation so that school goals may be achieved according to desired criteria.
2. Heads should involve the whole staff in educational change and innovation because teamwork environment provides the opportunity to learn the experiences of others and creates a healthy competitive environment for performing the assigned tasks in a quality way.
3. Teachers' negative personal beliefs are a challenge so head should arrange training for teachers to encourage them for educational change and innovation. This training will also enable the teachers to perform tasks efficiently and focus on students' learning.
4. Government should provide financial resources for the implementation of educational change and innovation so that economic growth may be achieved and educational opportunities may be assured in the institution.

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