



RESEARCH PAPER

Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Principal Leadership and its Impact on Teacher Performance

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of the influence of principal leadership on their performance. The population of this study was female teachers working in Federal Government Schools in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. This study was conducted in the Cantt Garrison area and targeted only female educators who were working in Federal Government Elementary Institutions. Data was collected by conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 20 educators selected using the convenience sampling technique. The data was analyzed using open, axial and selective coding resulting in the emergence of seven themes namely; trust, motivation, good listening, delegation of responsibilities, decision-making, supportive environment and communication. Acknowledgement and visibility were subthemes of communication. The findings of the study reveal that teachers felt that supportive leadership work environment boosts their confidence, morale, participation, adjustment, and management of their professional tasks effectively. However, teachers attributed their motivation, responsibility, resources, experience, and personal needs to these factors as well. The study concluded that effective principal's leadership might enhance teacher's performance through the establishment of supportive relational and organizational conditions, not as a single determining factor.

KEYWORDS Principal's Leadership, Teachers' Perception, Teacher's Performance, Educational Leadership, Qualitative Research, Pakistan

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in personal and societal development, especially in a globalized and digital world. It provides knowledge, skills, and competencies that increase individuals' productivity and improve their quality of life (Farooq et al., 2011). Therefore, enhancing the quality of education and students' learning outcomes has become a primary mission of many educational researchers.

Earlier studies have revealed several factors that contribute to students' academic achievement. These variables can be classified into two main groups, including environmental and student-related factors. The former refers to such aspects as the influence of school administrators, provision of educational resources, and teachers' effectiveness, whereas the latter is student's intellectual capacity, self-management level, motivation, and aspirations (Rustiyah et al., 2021). Among the above factors, it should be noted that school leadership plays an important role since it has a direct influence on the organizational environment where teachers operate and the learning environment where students engage. The role of school leadership is considered significant since it may impact teachers' practices, motivation, commitment, and performance, which in turn contribute to enhancing the quality of education (Tedla & Kilango, 2022).

In this regard, the role played by a school principal is undeniably multifaceted, ranging from offering pedagogical guidance and support to teachers to maintaining a proper educational environment within the school community. Therefore, the efficacy of a leader's work may be reflected in teachers' ability to successfully perform their duties. Nonetheless, the way in which educational leaders can facilitate teachers' performance needs to be elaborated further.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the impact of principal leadership styles on the teachers' performance, emphasizing those aspects that facilitate effective learning and positive professional outcomes. As such, the current research is aimed at exploring how leadership styles affect teachers' performance as perceived by the teachers themselves and not as a singular independent variable.

Leadership

Leadership is a concept that has been defined from various perspectives and, therefore, remains multifaceted and complex. It has been defined from numerous theoretical points of view and organizational levels, and its exact definition is difficult to be identified consistently in different sources (Pardosi & Utari, 2021). Leadership could be defined as an influence function that enables a leader to guide the employees' behaviors towards enhancing collective work and attaining organizational goals (Winston & Patterson, 2006). It includes directing, effective decision-making, motivating, and achieving positive change in an organization, and community (Parveen et al., 2022). In educational institutions, leadership is very significant because the leaders are those who take care of the vision and goals of the organization and turn them into reality for the teachers, students, and the whole school community.

The Role of the School Principal

School principals are key personnel in the proper functioning of institutions. With the rise of technological and social advancements, the principals need to handle the management functions while still offering their instructional and organizational abilities to the school system (Pardosi and Utari, 2021). The principals are responsible for supervising the schools as well as directing and managing resources and programs (Abbas et al., 2020).

Principals also play a role in the professional development and performance of teachers by recruiting, allocating tasks, evaluating performance, mentoring, and providing opportunities for teachers to develop their skills (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Moreover, principals are also tasked with interpreting and enforcing education policies developed by the relevant authorities and monitoring their implementation in the school (Dhuey & Smith, 2018). This way, principals may influence the school organizational climate where teachers operate and students learn.

Effective principal leadership is therefore more than just administrative management. It also involves providing appropriate working conditions, professional development opportunities, and clarifying and supportive relationships so that teachers can carry out their work properly. These are the principal leadership dimensions the current research will explore.

Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Leadership

The perception of teachers is an essential aspect of the effective school leadership model since the effectiveness of a principal cannot be determined from the leader's alone view. Effective school leadership and teaching are both integral components to school improvement; nevertheless, the mere existence of a principal is not always indicative of effective leadership (Samuels, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2001). School principals often have to deal with such issues as barriers to learning, enhanced instruction, resource allocation, and a variety of constituencies (Bellamy et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005). Such demands make school administration a challenging occupation where the principal has to balance a number of often-conflicting areas, including instructional, administrative, interpersonal, and organizational aspects. Therefore, it is evident that effective school leadership requires more than just the position of a principal and the ability to manage his or her own agenda; rather, it demands a high level of proficiency in various areas as well as the ability to respond to the

needs of others.

The perceptions of teachers are particularly critical since teachers are those who are directly affected by the leadership styles enacted by the principals. Though a principal may think that they are efficient in their leadership abilities, they should understand that the efficiency is determined by the extent to which teachers and other staff members acknowledge and accept their leadership (Gimbel, 2003). Rooney argues that principals are rarely in a position to understand how they are perceived by teachers and what their influence is in regard to the former's conduct (2008). Therefore, knowledge about leadership should be gained from those who experience it on a daily basis and who take part in the process of being led.

Feedback is an essential mechanism through which principals can come to terms with how their leaders' behaviours are perceived by their teachers. Kouzes and Posner (2006) argued that leaders have an opportunity to obtain significant information on their performance by inviting their followers to provide them with feedback. Therefore, investigating teachers' perceptions can play a critical role in identifying leadership behaviours that enhance or impede effective school functioning, teacher support and professional performance.

In this study, teachers' perceptions of principal leadership mean their views and experiences of their principals' behaviors, practices, support, communication approaches, decision-making styles, and overall effectiveness as leaders. By exploring these perceptions, one can understand the principal leadership in the school and explain how it probably affects the teachers' professional performance.

Teachers may react differently towards the same leadership styles. This consideration is significant in the qualitative study because it allows taking into account both positive and negative experiences of leadership practices, and not make a generalization about all teachers' experiences.

Although effective principal leadership is generally recognized as a critical success factor in school functioning and improvement, teachers may perceive and evaluate practices of leadership differently. Therefore, it is important to explore teachers' perceptions of the key practices such as trust, motivation, listening, delegating, decision-making, support, and communication. The purpose of this paper is to find out how teachers understand and assess the influence of these practices on their professional performance and overall workplace experience.

In this regard, the paper explores the perception of female educators working in Federal Government Elementary Institutions in Cantt Garrison, Rawalpindi. Specifically, the research will attempt to discover professionals' views regarding the impact of principal's leadership and its influence on their performance.

Literature Review

Teacher Performance

Teacher performance, on the other hand, refers to the level of proficiency or the amount of work accomplished by the teachers in the course of their professional conduct (Wolkoff et al., 2021). Since it is a multifaceted concept, it can be evaluated using different parameters depending on the objectives of the researcher and the factors that it is desired to examine (Stonehouse & Abeykoon, 2022). Studies have shown that teacher performance can be determined by both internal and external factors. The former consists of psychological, physical, academic, and social attributes, whereas the latter refers to the working conditions of the teachers (Mittal et al., 2022). These factors are considered to

impact teachers' attitude and behaviour towards their profession (Salin et al., 2020).

Teacher performance is one of the key success drivers of educational institutions since they directly participate in the teaching and learning process, and they interact with students on a daily basis (Sarker et al., 2019). Therefore, the success of educational institutions is highly dependent on teachers' professional performance. Organization performance, in turn, can be measured to a great extent by the extent to which an organization's aims and objectives are achievable (Alhawamdeh & Alsmairat, 2019). Thus, educational institutions must give special attention to factors that enhance teacher performance, since improved individual performance can lead to increased organizational effectiveness and improved education quality (Dabbagh et al., 2021; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020).

Role and Responsibilities of School Principals

The school principal is the key operator in the efficient functioning of the educational facility. Their role entails organizing educational processes, leading the school administrative system, mentoring and supervising professional activity, and maintaining educational infrastructure and facilities (AlDaajeh et al., 2022). School principals are the key drivers of many of the critical aspects of the school's life, such as student discipline, positive school culture, and the reduction of delinquent student behavior (Weber & Vereenoghe, 2020). With the growing complexity of the problems principals have to solve, their professional growth and improvement are concerned with the development of leadership qualities, managerial competencies, supervisory abilities, and social skills (Bergestuen et al., 2022).

As the senior-most authority of a school, the principal can play a crucial role in the development and overall performance of the institution. Hence, they must possess effective administrative skills and a strong sense of responsibility towards their work, as well as a degree of flexibility to deal with challenges (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). In addition, school leadership should strive to improve the staff's professional performance by introducing specific programs that upgrade their skills and capabilities (Lazaro-Mojica & Fernandez, 2021). Moreover, the head of an educational institution is supposed to formulate a particular vision and mission and apply integrated educational management strategies aimed at elevating quality (Pashiardis & Kafa, 2022). Finally, effective leadership demands a set of personal characteristics, competency skills, and leadership abilities that help the principals lead educational institutions to success (Dervenis et al., 2022).

Effective Principal Leadership

Another key obligation of the principal includes effective resource and facility management for enhancing teaching and learning processes. Notably, appropriate management of resources and facilities promotes graduate's quality, which is manifested in the presence of the required knowledge, skills, and competencies (Díez et al., 2020). Therefore, it can be concluded that the quality of the learning process may be determined by the efficiency of the transformation of available resources and educational conditions into the relevant outputs and added value for students who finish a specific educational level or learning program (Fekih Zguir et al., 2021).

The principal is generally considered to be a significant contributor to both the success and the failure of a school (Jourdan et al., 2021). In his or her work, an efficient principal uses his or her qualifications to help students, teachers, administrative staff, and parents to get motivated and encouraged. The success of a principal can be defined by his or her ability to rally school stakeholders around common goals, which can be used for the achievement of the collective purpose of the institution (Leithwood, 2021). Thus, principals must understand educational expectations, including graduate competencies and

characteristics, to lead educational institutions. Moreover, they should manage and motivate educational personnel appropriately to ensure that students get high-quality learning experiences and that educational standards are enhanced (Cascio, 2019). An efficient principal can be a role model for teachers, students, and other stakeholders while being able to demonstrate communication skills and adapt to organizational changes (Sivarajah et al., 2019).

Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Leadership

Besides school administrators, teachers are equally important in evaluating and addressing school leadership. Their active participation in examining a principal's role can enhance school quality and a harmonious working environment (Schott et al., 2020). A positive school culture should be based on a mutual understanding and respect between the head of the institution and the staff members, who should participate actively in attaining the quality of education and the school's improvement process (Samara, 2021). In addition, teachers should recognize and freely express their concerns when the leader's conduct or act may adversely affect the school (Janssen et al., 2020). If the principal commits an inappropriate act, teachers should have a right to give feedback and help to find an acceptable solution (Janssen et al., 2020). In this regard, effective educators should strive to accept employees' input actively and consider it when addressing the issues for the organization's improvement (Cui, 2021).

Teachers' perceptions are particularly critical to understanding the effectiveness of principal leadership. Teachers' perceptions can shed light on whether the leader is performing his or her organizational roles as expected (S. W. Lee & Mao, 2023). Teachers develop their understanding of their principal's leadership practice through their experiences. Perception is a process by which an individual assesses an object, event, or experience in terms of its meaning that is informed by knowledge, theory, belief, or prior experience (Tripp & Munson, 2022). As such, teachers may develop different perceptions of their principals' leadership practices; whereas for some educators, the experience can be positively perceived, for others, it can be negatively evaluated (Grissom & Condon, 2021).

Factors Influencing Teachers' Perceptions of Principal's Leadership

Individual teachers may react differently to the leadership practices and activities of their principals (Tingle et al., 2017). They can be positive or negative depending on how teachers understand and evaluate the behaviors of the chief in the art of leadership (Hiller et al., 2019). Perception can generally be considered an individual's immediate response to external stimuli through the senses (Sarasso et al., 2020). From a social-psychological point of view, perception involves organizing and interpreting stimuli received by an individual and assigning meaning to these stimuli. It is therefore an integrated process that takes place within the individual (Wilson & Coan, 2021). Teachers' perceptions are influenced not only by their present circumstances but also by their previous experiences and their attitudes at a certain point in time (Golbabaie et al., 2020).

There are various organizational variables that could impact teachers on a personal level. Some of these factors include, but are not limited to, the working environment, the suitability of the teachers' educational background, supervisory and instructional policies, salary and welfare, learning resources, motivation, the leadership styles of the principal, the workplace culture, gender-related issues in the workplace, and discipline (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). The change in the school's leadership could also affect the teachers' perception of the teaching environment since they may compare the leadership styles of the previous and current administration (DeMathews et al., 2020). Consequently, it is likely for teachers to develop divergent expectations and attitudes towards the new leadership and show less compliance or dedication to the teacher's guidelines (Daniëls et al., 2019).

Teacher Discipline and Professional Performance

Discipline is an essential component of every organization because organizational rules and regulations provide a framework for members' behavior and help direct their actions toward the achievement of institutional objectives (Ali et al., 2021). In the school context, teacher discipline refers to the development of voluntary attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with established organizational rules, regulations, and professional expectations, whether formally documented or informally recognized (Kragt & Holtrop, 2019). Discipline enables individuals to understand which behaviors are required, acceptable, or prohibited within an organization (Kar & Dwivedi, 2020). When discipline becomes internalized, it can develop from an individual's awareness and eventually become an established part of professional behavior (Jusup et al., 2022).

The lack of discipline among teachers, especially on matters relating to punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, professional attitudes, and responsibilities, can adversely affect teachers' performance. Lack of discipline may also reduce teachers' creativity and effectiveness, which makes the learning process monotonous and uninteresting (Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021).

Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance

Based on the reviewed literature, it is evident that the factors of principal's leadership, teachers' perception of leadership, and teacher's performance are interconnected. A principal's administrative, supervisory, communicative, and supportive behaviors toward teachers impact their performance. Simultaneously, teachers' perceptual sets influence the way they receive this leadership. Overall, effective leadership behaviors, such as providing opportunities, participation, feedback, motivation, and support, result in positive organizational commitment and promote professional performance.

Teachers' perceptions are, therefore, essential in exploring how the aspects of leadership practices are experienced within the school environment. Their interpretation of the principal's decisions, communication, support, and leadership behaviors are key areas where teachers respond to and perceive these issues. On the other hand, the teaching staff's performance is influenced by many aspects, including motivation, discipline, resources, and culture. Therefore, exploring the teachers' perceptions of principal leadership practices is an informative exercise that helps understand factors affecting teachers' performance.

The reviewed literature covers the importance of teacher performance and the role of school administration, particularly the principal, in the school's effectiveness. In addition, the reviewed literature shows that teacher perspectives are essential in assessing the effectiveness of the leader and some organizational variables may determine professional performance. However, there is a research gap in the available literature in this study that examines teachers' perspectives on principal leadership, specifically in Federal Government Schools in Rawalpindi. This study aims to fill this research gap.

In this respect, investigating teachers' perceptions about principal leadership is relevant to identify factors associated with their performance. Thus, the present study aims to explore the effect of teachers' perceptions of principal leadership on teacher performance in Federal Government Schools, Rawalpindi. The study findings will help in gaining an insight into the role of school leadership, teachers' perceptions and professional performance and might contribute to the enhancement of school management and quality of education.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The research study implemented the qualitative form of research to investigate the perception of teachers about the effective principal leadership and its impact on raising their performance. The research method involved conducting face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with respondents to generate in-depth information.

Research Population

The research study's target population comprised female teachers working in Federal Government Elementary Institutions in Cantt Garrison, Rawalpindi. The population included thirty-two (32) schools and 20 female teachers were interviewed for research purpose. It is advisable to describe the research population in terms of female teachers since the study interviewed teachers, not the school principals.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study adopted a convenience sampling technique. Twenty female teachers were randomly selected and interviewed for this study.

The participants consented to the study, and their anonymity was guaranteed with the use of pseudonyms.

Research Instrument

The study's research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide. The guide was designed to enable the participants to describe their experiences and perceptions of principals' leadership styles while allowing the researcher the flexibility to ask probing questions

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from the twenty participants selected for the study through face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted to generate information regarding teachers' experience concerning principal leadership and their perceptions of professional performance.

The collected interviews were subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using several stages of coding. First, I performed an open coding to identify concepts and assign preliminary codes to segments of the data. Second, an axial coding was used to explore connections between identified concepts and create categories and subcategories. Finally, a selective coding was done to discover associations between the main categories and verify emerging themes and patterns. Initially, the analysis process involved these three phases of coding as described by the initial description of the analysis.

As a result of the analysis, seven major themes were identified:

- Trust
- Motivation
- Good listening

- Delegation of tasks
- Decision making
- Supportive environment
- Communication

Acknowledgement and visibility were found to be subthemes of communication.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative research results, both confirming and disconfirming evidence were considered during the analysis process. Initially, the open coding was performed, followed by axial and selective coding to establish connections between various categories.

Ethical considerations

Since the study involved participants' personal data, confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms in the final report. Also, the decision to participate in the study was completely voluntary.

Results and Discussion

Face-to-face interviews were conducted to ascertain teachers' perceptions of principal leadership and its influence on their performance. The interviews were transcribed and underwent open, axial, and selective coding.

Seven themes emerged from the analysis which were trust, motivation, good listening, delegation of tasks, decision making, supportive environment, and communication. The latter included such subthemes as acknowledgement and visibility.

Theme 1: Trust

Trust was the first theme that emerged from the analysis. The participants reported experiencing the trust of their principals when they faced certain challenges. For instance, Aneeta recalled her principal's attitude when her child fell ill:

"Whenever she needed the help of any sort then, the school principal supports and guides her."

In Tehreem's case, she felt understood by her principal, who allowed her to bring her baby to the school when necessary:

"I feel comfortable as sometimes the principal allows me to bring my baby along."

Rumshah had similar positive feelings about her principal's supportive attitude as she adjusted to her new workplace.

Alia, who has just graduated, also pointed out that she has received support and confidence from the principal while adjusting to the school environment.

In general, participants identified trust as an essential attribute of an effective leader. Trust was linked by participants to confidence, adjustment, and professional functioning.

Theme 2: Motivation

Motivation was another common theme identified in the study. The participants identified a few crucial motivating factors that enhance their work. These motivating factors include visits to the class, teaching advice, certificates, inspirational talks, encouragement, and provision of resources.

Maria mentioned that regular school visits and teaching advice motivated her to prepare and teach with more energy. Affia said that she felt that certificates for good performance were motivational, while Nazish said that encouragement from the principal encouraged him to overcome his hesitation in dealing with boys when he first started. Fehmida mentioned that she felt that the principal's trust and confidence motivated him to adjust and motivate himself.

On the other hand, there was also an important contrasting view. One participant said that her motivation and performance did not improve thanks to the head teacher, but rather her professional attitude was due to her desire to teach.

The participants also identified the availability of resources and materials for teaching as motivating factors.

Theme 3: Good Listening

Good listening was a quality that participants often attributed to their principals. Open-door policy, daily interactions, addressing teachers' issues, and managing conflicts were qualities that participants appreciated in their leaders.

Aneeta reflected on frequent and supportive communication and the open door policy. Salma noted that her principal would visit classes, listen attentively to staff members, assess classroom discipline, and take appropriate action depending on the information garnered.

Kanwal noted that the principal would deal with errors lightly whereas another participant recalled an instance where the principal listened patiently to both sides of a dispute over student's grades before taking any action.

The findings suggest that teachers appreciated having leaders who would first listen to problems before offering solutions as well as those who balanced management and approachability effectively.

Theme 4: Delegation of Tasks

The participants noted that the head teachers shared responsibilities with teachers. In my case, Nadia explained that she had been tasked with preparing one of the competitions, debate, which was strange since she was still relatively new to her position. However, she did not see this as a negative as it meant the principal had confidence in her capabilities.

Delegation was therefore a sign of the head teachers' confidence in the teachers and gave them the responsibility to show their skills.

Theme 5: Decision Making

Teacher inclusion emerged as another key theme in the research. The participants shared instances where teachers are allowed to voice out their opinions prior to the final decision being reached.

Sehnaz explained that the teachers are given a platform to voice their opinions and that decisions are made after such discussions. She gave an example of a scenario in which the principal, subject teacher and class teacher make collective decisions on whether a student repeats a class or is promoted.

The participants were generally positive about decision-making as it gave the teachers a chance to have their say.

Theme 6: Supportive Environment

The theme of the supportive environment encompassed both personal and professional support.

Tayabba talked about how the principal helped out teachers who had transport problems by transferring them to a nearer school.

Rubeena also shared that she experienced help regarding matters concerning her salary and allowance.

Faiza on the other hand experienced comfort through the principal's and staff's support which in turn improved her morale. In addition, participants experienced equal treatment and served as substitutes for each other as well as received guidance on tests and lesson planning and feedback on class work as forms of support.

Work Performance

As per the collected responses, respondents were able to report several indicators used to measure their performance in professional practice, including lesson planning, punctuality, methodology, school duties, and responsibilities.

For instance, Salma recalled giving lesson plans and using questions in the classroom, whereas Tehreem mentioned being punctual despite multiple personal problems; hence, her principal adjusted her schedule to make school commutes easier.

In another example, a respondent stated that a teacher's performance depended on ACRs, punctuality, duties, and responsibilities related to the area of work and their capacity.

However, Maria recalled giving reasons differently; hence no connection could be made between the head of school and her performance level. Specifically, the respondent mentioned completing her duties due to personal responsibility and being compensated for the work. Notably, Maria further revealed that she did not consider the head teacher's role in her performance.

Therefore, this illustration is significant in that it helps establish that respondents were not entirely committed to identifying principal roles in their performance.

Theme 7: Communication

Communication was identified by participants as being an important aspect of principal leadership. Participants reported that they were held regular weekly meetings, conducted class observations, held face-to-face discussions, notice-board information, communication of timetable changes and opportunities to discuss issues. One participant discussed how face-to-face discussion allowed teachers to express their opinions and receive private feedback about areas for improvement.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement surfaced as a subtheme of communication. The participants appreciated the acknowledgement of the efforts of the teachers by the principals.

Faiza recalled feeling appreciated when her efforts were acknowledged while Sadia further explained that the morale of the teachers was boosted when they received appreciation from the principal.

Visibility

Visibility occurred when the principal turned up in the school, interacted with the teachers and showed interest in their activities.

The participants depicted that their principals were easily accessible and visible since they could drop by at the staff room, listen to their problems, hold one-to-one discussions and openly appreciate them verbally.

Summary of Findings

The study established seven major themes associated with effective leadership by school principals. The themes were identified through teachers' statements and are presented below:

Theme	Summary of teachers' statements
Trust	Teachers appreciate confidence, understanding, and support.
Motivation	Teachers responded positively to encouragement, appreciation, class visits, and guidance.
Good Listening	Teachers value listening and careful consideration of problems.
Delegation	Teachers appreciate being delegated tasks as a sign of confidence and trust.
Decision Making	Teachers want to be involved and consulted when it comes to decision-making.
Supportive Environment	Personal, Professional, Instructional, and Practical Support Were Important
Communication	Regular, Timely, Face-to-Face, and Supportive Communication Was Highly Valued.

The findings overall suggest that teachers associated effective leadership with relational support, professional confidence, participation, communication, and aspects of professional performance at the same time, contrasting cases demonstrate that teachers' own motivation and professional responsibility may also explain performance.

Discussion

The discussion includes how teachers perceived leadership practice and how they associated this practice to professional performance.

Trust and Teacher Performance

Trust was among the major themes in the interviews and teachers recalled principals who were responsive to individual needs, trusted new teachers and let teachers get away with troubles.

These results are related to the literature indicating reciprocal relationships between principals and teachers. Teachers' perception of trust is formed in their interactions with school leadership.

In conceptual framework, trust can be seen as a teacher-level concept contributing to confidence, adjustment and professional engagement but qualitative results suggest a perceived association rather than demonstrated causal relationship.

Motivation and Teacher Performance

Participants identified encouragement, recognition, classroom visits, teaching advice, and resources as motivating factors. They believed that these factors helped the teachers deal with professional challenges and helped them adapt to new and unexpected settings.

This observation supports the review's idea that the principal must provide guidance, motivation, and encouragement. Nevertheless, another participant who attributed her success to personal passion shows that personal motivation might be more effective. With this information in mind, it would be correct to conclude that contextual factors, including encouragement, might impact some teachers' performance and motivation. However, such a relationship might be absent in other cases.

Listening and Professional Support

Good listening was developed through examples of open-door policies, day-to-day interactions, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

The literature also focuses on reciprocal relationships in which teachers can share concerns and contribute their perspectives. Listening is included in the conceptual framework as a relational mechanism through which teachers feel professionally supported and psychologically safe.

Delegation and Teacher Confidence

Delegation was positively related to confidence when it involved trust. Nadia's experience suggests that giving up a responsibility communicates confidence in a teacher's abilities.

Rather than concluding on the basis of this analysis that delegation boosts performance, we can say that well-chosen delegation strengthens teachers' sense of responsibility, professionalism, and self-esteem.

Participatory Decision Making

Teachers appreciated the opportunity to state their opinion before any decisions were made. This is in line with the research where teachers' voices are stressed. By giving teachers this kind of attention, their involvement in the decision-making process increases, which subsequently boosts their confidence and morale (see conceptual framework). Therefore, the participatory decision-making practice is positively related to the level of confidence and morale.

Supportive School Environment

One of the most common themes was support. The participants discussed being supported concerning transportation, pay and allowances, classroom planning, substitutes, preparation of lessons, and professional advice.

These results are consistent with the literature that describes the principal's responsibility to teachers: to provide guidance, mentor, manage resources, and supervise.

The results suggest that a supportive working environment can contribute to

teachers' performance since it reduces some of the stressors that they face, thus helping them to concentrate better on the job.

Communication, Acknowledgement and Visibility

Communication included regular meetings, visiting the class, sharing information in a timely manner, face-to-face meetings, and giving private corrective feedback.

These dynamics are integral parts of effective educational leadership, as evidenced by the reviewed literature. The article claims that communication, stakeholder coordination, teacher participation, and leadership response are important aspects of successful school leadership.

Acknowledgment is likely to boost teachers' sense of self-actualization, whereas visibility promotes accessibility and opportunities for direct contact, thus contributing to successful personal interaction processes that education leaders can use to support professional development.

Integration with the Conceptual Framework

The findings provided qualitative support for the study-developed conceptual framework. Trust, motivation, listening leadership, delegation of responsibility, participative decision-making, supportive environment, and communication were linked by participants to such teacher-level processes as confidence, morale, professional support, perceived value, adjustment, and reduction of work-related difficulties. These were related by participants to such indicators of teacher performance as preparation of lessons, punctuality, task completion, professional practices, and responsibility.

However, the findings also show that this phenomenon is not a strict one. It is established that many factors affect the work of teachers, for example, motivation, resources, professional experience, and personal circumstances.

Therefore, such a simplified scheme of the connection between the studied concepts should be regarded as a rough perception of the situation.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that the principal's leadership, as perceived by the teachers, was manifested through relational-, motivational-, participatory-, communication- and instructional-supportive practices.

The sense of trust and communication created the prerequisites for effective working relationships. Listening and participatory decision-making policies increased teachers' awareness. Delegation demonstrated the principal's confidence in teachers' capabilities, while supportive practices, acknowledgment, and visibility promoted teachers' self-confidence and professional pride.

Finally, in this study, there was no evidence that leadership could increase the levels of performance directly. Instead, teachers stated that support is needed to achieve satisfactory levels of performance. It means that effective leadership can be viewed as a tool to increase or maintain teachers' performance. Still, motivation, professional accountability, resources, experience, and personal characteristics should be considered as essential performance factors.

Conclusions

The study concluded that teachers generally viewed effective principal leadership as an important contextual condition for their professional experience and performance.

They appreciated trust as being associated with helpful and respectful relationships in which they felt confident and comfortable.

Motivation was achieved through encouragement, appreciation, class visits, instruction, and resources. However, one participant attributed his passion for teaching rather than the principal's leadership to his motivation, illustrating how teachers may differ in this regard.

Good listening was seen as important for resolving problems, dealing with conflicts, and building positive relationships between principals and teachers.

Recommendations

- Principals should build trust-based and respectful relationships with teachers by being fair and understanding their needs while providing the necessary support to them both in personal and professional aspects. It is also essential for the principal of the school to instill a feeling of respect and comfort so the educators can share their concerns openly. In addition, leaders should find a way to increase the teachers' motivation through encouragement, appreciation, recognition, support, and development. This way, the teachers will have a positive attitude towards the school administration and be more motivated to carry out their work successfully.
- The principal should boost and recognize teachers' efforts and accomplishments through praises, certificates, critiques, encouragement, and rewards. The teachers should also have time to visit classrooms to provide guidance and encouragement. Principals must practice open-door policies by creating a friendly and approachable environment where teachers can air their concerns, and the problems should be solved after hearing every party's version of the event.
- The principals should entrust teachers' responsibilities according to their competencies. Principals should entrust teachers with responsibilities depending on their experience and skill set. The authority should be given with the required resources so that they feel that what they do is a chance for them to show their ability and grow professionally.
- School principals should involve teachers in decision-making concerning their work, students, and the school in general. The involvement will make them responsible, confident, and motivate them to partake in the management of the school.
- The school administration should provide the necessary professional and practical support they need to do their work. The support can be in the form of resources, materials, lesson planning assistance, guidance, addressing their personal or work-related problems, and management issues.
- The principal should hold regular staff meetings and discussions, pay mid-year visits to classes, share information, address complaints formally and privately, give the teachers time to comment on them, and share all other pertinent information verbally.
- Principals must express appreciation to teachers for their efforts and achievements as it will encourage and motivate them. The principal should make his or her presence and availability more known to the teachers.
- The principal should increase his or her visibility and accessibility to the teachers. The principal should have an informal chat with individual teachers or one group of teachers in his classroom or staff room. It will assist the teachers to air their concerns freely and the principal gets an insight into their needs.
- The school administration should provide the needed resources for the smooth delivery of lessons. All participants noted the importance of resources as a motivating factor.
- Professional resources should be provided for the professional development of the principals in such areas as communication skills, listening, conflict resolution,

consultative selling, management of resources, motivating techniques, and supportive supervision as well as enhancing teacher skills.

- The school administration should consider other variables that may affect teachers' performance levels. Looking at the factors affecting teacher performance from other angles and not just leadership and control was a critical recommendation. The variables to consider include professional accountability, motivation, resources, and experience.
- The school administration should put in place a formal process for reviewing teachers' feedback on the leadership function. A formal process for receiving teachers' comments on leadership, which should be kept confidential, was another recommendation. The feedback will assist the principal in identifying areas of improvement.
- Exploring the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher performance was the last recommendation. The study should be done in a larger sample size and should involve male and female teachers and not just the Federal Government Elementary Institutions in Cantt Garrison, Rawalpindi. This is because this study focused on a small sample of the teachers in Pakistan.

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