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## **A Comparative Study of the Leadership Styles of the Heads of Higher Education Institutions in Public and Private Sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership styles of the heads of higher education institutions in public and private sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Objectives of the study were to investigate the leadership styles of the heads of higher education institutions of public and private sectors and compare the leadership styles of the heads of higher education institutions of public and private sectors. Population of the study included all the principals and

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teachers of higher education institutions of both the sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. 40 principals (20 Public and 20 Private), 80 teachers (40 Public, 40 Private) were taken as sample of the study. The sample was taken from district Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar and Lakki Marwat. Researcher personally visited and administrated the questionnaires to the principals and teachers respectively. To achieve the objectives of the study two questionnaires A & B were developed: Questionnaire A for principals and B for teachers containing 30 items, (01-30) i.e. (autocratic style 01-10, democratic style 11-20, laissez faire style 21-30). Data was collected, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Test.

**KEY WORDS:** Leadership, Leadership Styles, Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez Faire, Public, Private, Heads

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cheng (1996a) analyzed several definitions of leadership and narrated that it is a procedure which influences others and strives to set and achieve the goals of an organization. (Chibber, 2000) further stated that leadership is the power to decide on an action and the strength to see through it.

The term *style* can be narrated as ‘manner’ that a person practices to influence his staff members (Robert & Warren, 1973). Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary defines style as a distinctive manner of doing, performing or presenting something. Leadership style is a way, method or a strategy which is practiced by a person on his subordinates to motivate them and to give them directions how to execute certain plans (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).

According to (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), different leaders use different leadership styles to guide and motivate their subordinates to achieve the pre-determined objectives. Autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, transactional, charismatic, bureaucratic and servant leadership styles are most practiced styles these days. This study revolves around three basic leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In autocratic leadership style the leader enforces a rigid control and believes in the ‘carrot and stick method’ to control and motivate his staff members. The attitude of the leader is quite authoritarian irrespective of a centralized or decentralized system. The leader dictates staff members on his terms and conditions. He assigns tasks to his staff members without consulting them. He selects subordinates and seeks unquestioned conformity on the part of such persons. There is only one main advantage of this style; the decision making takes very less time but this may affect the group morale of the members. Communication in this style is normally one way (Powell, 2004).

In democratic leadership the leader believes in allowing participatory management. The group members are free to give their opinion. Decision making is quite cooperative and members enjoy the sense of belonging. It believes in giving emphasis to group action and decisions. The leaders are free to assume power with the acceptance of the group. Democratic leaders do not try to dominate the staff members by force or rigidity but seek cooperation of the members to run the affairs of the organization. The decision making process is quite slow in this leadership style (Marlene, 2002).

In *laissez-faire* leadership (delegative leadership) style, the leader avoids contact with the group and there is a free climate. There is no or very rare interference by the leader in running the functions of the organization. The leader is the active supplier of materials but he is not an active participant in decision-making. He participates only when he is asked to interfere in the affairs of the organization. As the members have freedom there is no control on group members and they try to realize their personal objectives rather than group objectives and as a result the group's cohesiveness may be lost (Bass, 1990).

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Population**

The population of the study comprised all the principals and teachers of Higher Education Institutions of Public and Private sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

#### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study was delimited to four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which were Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar, and Lakki Marwat.

#### **Sample**

Out of the above-stated population category-wise sample was drawn using stratified random sampling technique.

- i. Twenty colleges from public sector and twenty colleges from private sector were randomly selected as the sample of the study.
- ii. All the heads of the sampled public and private colleges were included in the study.

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- iii. Two teachers from each selected public and private college were taken at random for the sample.

## **6. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

Two Questionnaires (one for principals of higher education institution and other for teachers of higher education institutions) were used as research instruments for data collection.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Private sector principals are more autocratic than public sector principals as they mostly rely on threats and punishment to influence their staff members, demonstrate supervision through detailed orders & instructions and mostly motivate their staff members through force to accomplish tasks in time.

Public sector principals are more democratic than private sector principals as they mostly encourage their staff members to be a part of the decision making process, share decision making and problem solving responsibilities and allow their staff members to share ideas for establishing goals.

Public Sector principals as compared to private sector principals provide little or no direction to their staff members in performing their duties, give their staff members as much freedom as possible and minimize their personal involvement in decision-making so public sector principals tend to follow the laissez faire leadership style more than private sector principals.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of statistical analysis of the study, the following conclusions of the study were drawn.

1. Majority of the principals of private sector and some principals of public sector rely on threats and punishment to influence their staff members, demonstrate supervision through detailed orders and instructions, motivate staff members through force to accomplish tasks in time.
2. Majority of the principals of public sector and some principals of private sector encourage their staff members to be a part of the decision making process, share decision making and problem solving responsibilities, recognize and encourage achievements of their staff members and provide opportunities to staff members to develop a high sense of personal growth and job satisfaction.
3. Majority of the principals of public sector and some principals of private sector give their staff members as much freedom as possible, minimize their personal involvement in decision-making and oppose unnecessary interference in work of their staff members.
4. Majority of the teachers of private sector view that their principals rely on threats and punishment to influence their staff members, force staff members to act as per their direction and enforce college rules and regulations strictly.
5. Majority of the teachers of public sector found that their principals share decision making and problem solving responsibilities, allow their staff members to share ideas for establishing goals and recognize and encourage achievements of their staff members.

6. Majority of the teachers of public sector and some teachers of private sector view that their principals provide little or no direction to their staff members in performing their duties, give their staff members as much freedom as possible and encourage their staff members to determine goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own.
7. In the light of the findings of the study it is concluded that private sector principals tended to be autocratic as compared to public sector principals whereas public sector principals are more democratic in their approach and also demonstrate laissez faire style of leadership.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of conclusions of the study, following recommendations were made.

1. It was disclosed in the study that majority of the principals of private sector and some principals of public sector rely on threats and punishment to influence their staff members. It is therefore recommended that principals should motivate their staff members by properly guiding and assisting them. It will be possible only when principals quit authoritative style.
2. It was highlighted in the study that majority of the principals of private sector and some principals of public sector motivate staff members through force to accomplish tasks in time and force staff members to act as per their direction. They must be enlightened through well planned training sessions, arranging seminars and conferences that it is not the appropriate way to run the functions of the institutions.

3. It is recommended that private sector principals should also recognize and encourage the efforts of their staff members so that they may be motivated to perform their duties in best manner.
4. It is recommended that heads of private sector should also delegate some of their powers to teachers and other staff members as well. It will surely decrease their tension and fatigue and will be very handy in improving the overall performance of the institute in all aspects. It is very necessary for heads to create a collaborative environment with staff and they must provide opportunities of shared leadership to their subordinates.
5. It must be remembered that need based training is to be provided to heads so that they may perform their daily tasks in effective manner. It is recommended that efforts must be made to establish proper training centres to train the educational leaders and managers. Either it should be tried to establish new training centres at district level or already existing Institutes of Education and Research in certain universities may be used for this purpose.
6. It is also recommended that an aptitude test must be prepared for the selection of heads of institution. That aptitude test must contain all those dimensions which are obligatory for principals in terms of their personal & professional qualities and daily based responsibilities. This aptitude test must be conducted for every nominated head of institution.
7. A very comprehensive scrutiny procedure should be adopted for the selection of principals. It is recommended that selection of principals may be made through Public Service Commission and their promotion to next grade must be made conditional with the



performance of the principals. Such personnel should be selected who are visionary and possess problem solving capabilities.

8. A Comprehensive research should be conducted to explore effective methods of staff development for heads as well as for teachers to become successful school leaders. Effective training methods contribute in increasing the proficiency of heads for administrative purposes and overall personality development.
9. It is recommended that private principals also need to be democratic and must demonstrate the laissez faire style of leadership for better functioning of the institutions. They need to avoid excessive use of autocratic attitude as it is not constructive but devastating.

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