

## TEACHERS' SATISFACTION OF PRINCIPAL'S PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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### ABSTRACT

*The research was undertaken with a purpose to ascertain the perceptions of teachers at elementary school level about their school's principals' perceived leadership styles and their overall satisfaction. For this research, the teachers of Lahore Garrison Schools were selected from the overall elementary level branches at Lahore. Through random sampling technique, 90 elementary level teachers were selected from the six (6) branches of the school. An adapted and pilot-tested questionnaire was used to measure the perceptions of the teachers at a Likert point scale of five responses. Data was analyzed in the SPSS version 22.0 by applying the Means, Standard Deviations in descriptive statistics as well as independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA in inferential statistical techniques. A relatively strong correlation was found between the perceived principal leadership style and teachers' overall satisfaction. On overall satisfaction, the number of female elementary staff was more as compared to the male staff. The results of this study have practical implications on school principals, teachers and future researchers in this discipline.*

**KEY WORDS:** Perceived leadership style; teachers' satisfaction; elementary school teachers.

### INTRODUCTION

School administrations are always concerned about the productivity and outcomes of the schools. The leadership of an educational institute puts much effort for every outcome to be achieved. The school principals being the leaders of the schools adopt certain leadership styles which have direct as well as an indirect effect on the school's teachers and staff. Adeyemi (2010) reported, "Only principals who are prepared to tackle a complex, rapidly changing environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained improvement in student achievement."

Principals who practice situational leadership usually analyze the numerous abilities, desires, pros and cons of the team members and then they respond to differing circumstances (Kelley, 2005). School leadership is pertinent in any reform of the school and plays a key role in its quality aspects (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005). Consequently, the position of school leader/ principal should change from that of a manager to a leader in order to enable the interactive learning activities. The macro-level management of school resources and its standing in the society must be given full consideration by the school heads. Their roles must be to transform schools into effective input units for society (Kenneth & Faith, 2012). That is why major focus is placed on the abilities of school leaders in handling the school's internal processes through transformational leadership practices (Newstrom, 2007). Principals were earlier taken simply as school managers but nowadays school principals share the responsibility of classroom teaching, learning processes, development of the staff, curricular changes, individualized and school specific plans, implementation schedules, and most significantly school security measures and decisions (Ferrandino, 2001). Johnson (2004) stressed the role of principals as an anchor in teacher retention and improved teacher performances.

Lee (2005) emphasized that principals must take leadership roles and discuss the policies with the policy makers that interests the public. They need to play pivotal role in improving financial benefits for the upcoming teachers and also must take initiatives to address and combat unprofessional ways into teaching. They must strive for the quality of education and also make ways to provide tax rebates for the teachers. Johnson (2004) established by his work that through lucrative benefits the principals might attract teacher

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inflow but if they want to retain them then they must improve the quality culture and working environment of their respective schools. According to Kovach (2002) who proposed that educational institutions require employees having leadership capacity with collegial attributes for their team members. Therefore, school principals should be interested in selecting those employees who demonstrate team spirit and do efforts for the common goals. If there is no support from the principals in terms of administrative tasks and in providing conducive environment then teachers may switch their profession (Billingsley, 2003; Fullan, 2002).

Blackwell (2003) stated that recent teacher educator programs have focused more on the pedagogies and less on the students and learning by emphasizing on the lesson planning by the teachers for every class lecture then the gap between high achievers and low achievers might be reduced (Torff, 2005). Sargent and Hannum (2005) narrated that teachers' overall satisfaction is heavily dependent on the job performance, empowerment, and involvement in decision making and on job motivation. Many schools lose good teachers as they are unable to find their satisfaction levels (Grose, 2006). It is evident in the literature that absence of teachers in school hours has negative impact on the overall education system (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). Absenteeism is seen more in education than in any other workplaces, on top of it, this absenteeism is more damaging for the system (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). Research around the world has revealed that teachers' absence rate is recorded as 2.85% in Canada (Sirotnil, 2004), 4.8% in the United States (Kent, 2005) and 6-9% in Israel (Globerson & Ben-Yshai, 2002).

Marston (2006) explained that despite being different in their teaching styles and content, the elementary and secondary school teachers are very much similar in their levels of overall satisfaction and their commitment to 'core professional values' which motivates them to teach well. The teachers whose overall satisfaction levels are high they have been reportedly in the profession for more than 15 years. Theoretically, this research is based on the work of Maslow's Need hierarchy, Herzberg's Two Factor theory, Alderfer's Existence, Growth Relatedness theory, McClelland's theory of needs, Locke's Value theory, and job characteristic model. There are many theories supporting the job satisfaction and its factors that have some impact on the teachers and employees. The concept of leadership style is based and embedded in above mentioned leadership theories. This research has not particularly looked into any specific leadership style instead it is focused on assessing the perceived leadership styles of principals and analyzed the level of satisfaction of teachers based on that perceived leadership style. For satisfaction of teachers the theories are connected to the context of the factors that relate with the leadership of heads/principals and influence the overall satisfaction levels.

In Pakistan, for many decades the government is taking keen steps to uplift the education system, especially with reference to quality education. Numerous initiatives have been taken by the ruling governments to ensure teachers' punctuality, and quality education. The overall satisfaction of the teachers is affected by multiple factors (Ali, Zaman, Tabassum, & Iqbal, 2011). One amongst them is the leadership style of the principal which may be seen in the theories mentioned in the above section. Elementary teachers take classes from 1 to 8, their satisfaction level is highly related with their performance and development of children. Elementary level schools provide the base to the students and if the base is strong then the whole education system can flourish. Moreover, in literature there is less evidence seen on elementary level and more studies can be found on secondary level schools. Therefore, the researcher planned to undertake this research at elementary level. Hence, the famous school chain of Lahore which is functional all over Pakistan with federal as well as provincial board set ups, the Lahore Garrison Education System was chosen.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

Following objectives were made for this study:

1. Explore the correlation between leadership style of principals and teachers' satisfaction in elementary school at Lahore.

2. Examine the difference in perceived leadership style of principals in elementary school at Lahore according to demographic variables like; age, gender and experience.
3. See the difference in Teachers' overall satisfaction in elementary school teachers at Lahore according to demographic variables like; age, gender and experience.

For these objectives the following research questions grounded in the literature were formulated.

1. What is the relationship between leadership styles of principals and teachers' overall satisfaction level?
2. Do demographic variables like age, gender, and experience make any significant difference in the perception of elementary school teachers about their principals' leadership styles?
3. Is there any significant level of difference in teachers' overall satisfaction in elementary school teachers at Lahore according to demographic variables like; age, gender and experience?

## **PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY**

This study was a survey type research. Descriptive correlational method was conducted to explore the correlations.

### **Population**

Population of the study was all the branches of the Lahore garrison school at Lahore. There were 12 branches of this school where elementary level was functional, which included junior schools, high schools and academies (Lahore Garrison Education System, 2017). The elementary level teachers were the subjects of this study.

### **Sampling Design**

Sampling technique used for this empirical research was the random sampling technique. Out of twelve (12) branches of Lahore garrison school system where elementary section is functional, the researcher selected one half (1/2) of the branches randomly through lottery method. Sample of this study were the elementary level teachers of the six (6) randomly selected branches of the Lahore garrison schools. From each of the 6 branches, 15 teachers were randomly selected. A total of 90 elementary level teachers were the sample size of this research.

### **Instrumentation**

Adapted questionnaires were used as the instruments for this study. All items were closed ended. Questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents. The questionnaire contained two parts: one for the perceived principals' leadership styles (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012) and second for the overall teachers' satisfaction (Demirtas, 2010). These two questionnaires were adapted to jell in with the context of Pakistan and elementary schools. The adapted questionnaires were validated for face and content validity by five educational experts of the educational administration and leadership subject. After incorporating their suggested changes the revised tool was administered for a pilot study to check the reliability statistics of the tool. In the pilot testing of 18 teachers other than the actual sample the reported coefficient of reliability on Cronbach alpha was 0.80 and 0.83 for the two questionnaires respectively, which is considered good in survey type researches (Bolarinwa, 2015). The final questionnaires had 20 items for perceived leadership part and 18 items for overall teachers' satisfaction portion and they were measured at a Likert type scale of five responses.

### **Data Collection**

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents personally in each branch of the school and a brief purpose of the study, and explanation of the questionnaire was shared with the respondents. Data collection was ethically considered, informed consent was taken from the participants and it was assured that the

information provided by them would be kept confidential. Out of the 90 selected sample teachers, 81 were received back by the researcher. Out of those 81 questionnaires, one was not professionally filled; therefore it was rejected and not included in the actual data analysis. Finally, a total of 80 questionnaires were entered for analysis and interpretations. The response rate (90%) of the study was good as indicated in quantitative studies (see Munir & Iqbal, 2018).

## RESULTS

After entering the data into the spreadsheet of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0, various descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques were applied. Demographic analysis of the respondents revealed that 60% of the respondents were females. This showed the female representation in the field of education as established in the study of (Abdullah & Akhtar, 2016). It was seen that 58.8% of the teachers were young and belonged to age group of 25-30 years. Only 3 teachers were from the age group of 41-45 which was also the oldest category. The experience was endorsed with the age of the respondents. A total of 55% were having experience of teaching of about 01-05 years. While 36.3% of the teachers showed experience of 06-10 years whereas, only 8.8% teachers were showing experience of 11-15 years.

Table 1

*Correlation between principals' perceived leadership styles and teachers' satisfaction (N= 80)*

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i>
Principal Leadership and Teacher Satisfaction	0.57**	.000

\*\* $p < 0.01$

On applying Pearson *r* product moment correlation on the principals' perceived leadership styles and teachers' overall satisfaction in table 1, a correlation coefficient was found relatively strong with the value of ( $r = 0.57$ ) significant at 0.01. The value of correlation coefficient above 0.50 is considered strong. It means that principals' perceived leadership styles and teachers' overall satisfaction are strongly correlated with each other in this study. The relationship is positive which means that if one thing increases the other also increases. Table 2 revealed that there was no significant mean difference found in the perception of teachers about their principals' leadership styles in terms of gender.

Table 2: *Independent sample t-test on the principals' perceived leadership styles in terms of gender*

Leadership Styles	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>
	Male	2.12	.47	-1.01	78	0.31
	Female	2.25	.62			

$p < 0.05$

In table 3, an insignificant mean difference may be seen in the perceptions of teachers about their principals' leadership styles in terms of the age and experiences.

Table 3: *One-Way ANOVA on the perceived leadership styles on the basis of Age and Experience*

Leadership Styles		Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Age	Between groups	0.326	3	.109	.332	.92
	Within groups	24.906	76	.328		
	Total	25.232	79			
Experience	Between groups	.053	2	.026		
	Within groups	25.180	77	.327	.081	.80
	Total	25.232	79			

$p < 0.05$

Table 4: *Independent sample t-test on teacher satisfaction with gender*

Teacher satisfaction	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Effect size
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Male	3.10	.53	-2.78	78	0.006	0.31
Female	3.44	.53				

$p < 0.01$

The table 4 illustrated that, upon applying independent sample t-test there was significant difference reported in the overall satisfaction of the elementary school teachers on the basis of their gender. Female elementary school teachers were showing significantly more mean score than that of males. The t value - 2.78 significant at  $p < 0.01$  implied that female elementary school teachers ( $M = 3.44$ ) of this sample were more satisfied than the male elementary school teachers ( $M = 3.10$ ). Although the mean difference is not too much but the effect size of this difference was 0.31, which is considered high. It implied that, the difference in the opinion was significant in female and male teachers.

Table 5: *One-Way ANOVA on the teachers' overall satisfaction based on their Age and Experience*

Teachers Satisfaction		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P
Age	Between groups	1.711	3	.570	1.947	.129
	Within groups	22.264	76	.293		
	Total	23.975	79			
Experience	Between groups	.242	2	.121		
	Within groups	23.733	77	.308	.392	.677
	Total	23975	79			

$p < 0.05$

Table 5 depicted that there was no significant difference in the overall teachers' satisfaction on the basis of their age and experience. It means that the teachers' satisfaction is not changed with the change in age and experience of the teachers of elementary school level.

## DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the perceptions of the elementary level school teachers about the perceived leadership styles of their principals and its correlation with the overall teacher satisfaction. The discussion is presented in a way to provide answers for each research question separately.

**Research question 1.** *Are perceived leadership styles of principals and teachers' overall satisfaction levels significantly correlated?*

To answer this question, Pearson r product moment correlation was applied, which revealed that there is positive; relatively strong and significant correlation between the teachers' perceived principal leadership styles and overall teachers' satisfaction. It means that the perceptions of teachers about their principals' leadership styles have a certain relationship with the overall satisfaction at workplace. The results of this study are concerned with (Chaudhry, Ahmad, Malik, & Batool, 2017; Kent, 2005). It is seen, if teachers perceive that the principals' leadership styles are good; their satisfaction at the workplace gets better. It is important to note for the administration and the stakeholders that teachers feel comfortable at the workplace with one pertinent factor that is the school principals' leadership styles. It is a limitation of this study that it does not identify the various leadership styles in practice in schools. A study is recommended at this point to probe into the practicing leadership styles of the principals and see their impact on the performances of the staff.

**Research question 2.** *Do demographic variables like age, gender, and experience make any significant difference in the perception of elementary school teachers about their principals' leadership styles?*

The question investigated is that, "Do teachers' perceptions about their principals' leadership styles vary with the demographics of the teachers?" Inferential statistical tests were applied on the data; t-test was applied on the gender to trace any differences in the perceptions of the teachers about principals' leadership

styles. There was no significant difference found in the perception of teachers about it. The results are in congruence with the study of (Bogler, 2001). One-way ANOVA was applied to see if the age and experience of teachers make their perceptions about principals' leadership styles significantly different. No significant difference was revealed in the perceptions of teachers in terms of the different age and experience category of the teachers. The possible reason for these findings may be that, in the private sector there is no change in the leadership styles of the principals. Private sector schools primarily focus on the results and outcomes and for that they have prescribed norms, and guidelines. The teachers are also heavily loaded with the work across the board, therefore, that might be why the teachers in the sample perceived same leadership styles of the teachers. The study of Sari and Judge (2004) supports this finding. The researcher suggests another research to compare the perceived leadership styles of principals in the opinions of teachers of private sector elementary schools and public sector elementary schools. This research may add to the literature about the similarities and differences in the perceived leadership styles of principals in public and private sectors. Moreover, this research would also be able to predict the overall performance of teachers and students based on the perceived leadership styles.

**Research question 3.** *Is there any significant level of difference in teachers' overall satisfaction in elementary school teachers at Lahore according to demographic variables like; age, gender and experience?*

Inferential statistical tests were applied on the data. On the basis of age and experience there was no significant difference reported in the overall satisfaction of the teachers. This could be because the teachers of the sample were all from the private sector and there are similar facilities provided to all the teachers irrespective of their age and/ or experience. The results are consistent with the studies (Saari & Judge, 2004; Sharma & Bajpai, 2011; Terera & Ngiranda, 2014). However, gender significant differences were seen in the overall satisfaction of the teachers. Reportedly, female elementary level teachers were more satisfied as compared to males. This satisfaction of female teachers might possibly be because of the free, safe and secure environment at the Lahore garrison schools for the females. Generally, it is seen that females are encouraged to join teaching profession (Abdullah & Akhtar, 2016). The results are also supported by the work of (Waga & Simatwa, 2014). But these might not be consistent in all private sector schools therefore, the researcher does not imply to generalize this finding and recommend further studies to understand and decipher the working levels and satisfaction levels for female teachers in public sector and private sector schools. Hence, in this way answers to all research questions were provided and the objectives of the research were achieved.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This descriptive correlational research concluded that the overall satisfaction of elementary level school teachers is related with their perceptions about their school principals' leadership styles. There is a positive, significant and relatively strong correlation between the perceived leadership styles of the principals and teachers' overall satisfaction in the sample of this research. Female teachers at elementary level are reportedly more satisfied with the job in the sample school system as compared to the male counterparts. Teachers usually have same perceptions about their school principals' leadership styles irrespective of their age, gender and experience. This study may be considered as a threshold in this field as it has put weight behind the perceived leadership styles of principals through the opinions of teachers. This study might open gateways of research in similar stream. Performances of teachers could also be evaluated in other research through the perceived leadership styles. A predictive and investigative research is recommended to probe further in the leadership styles of the elementary school principals and predict its impact on the teachers' performances. Private elementary school administrations are recommended to adopt better leadership styles as it has reported a significant correlation with the teachers' satisfaction. Female teacher recruitments are encouraged at elementary school levels in Lahore. Other studies may be conducted in other cities and on

different sample size and scope to determine the overall condition of perceived leadership styles and overall job satisfaction of teachers to analyze the dynamics of various sub-cultures of Pakistan.

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