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Volume: 7, Issue 1, 2020 (Jan-Mar.)

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW, EDUCATION,
SOCIAL AND SPORTS STUDIES
(IJLESS)**

<http://www.ijless.kypublications.com/>

ISSN: 2455-0418 (Print), 2394-9724 (online)
2020©KY PUBLICATIONS, INDIA

www.kypublications.com

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EXPLORING THE KEY DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

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DOI: [10.33329/ijless.7.1.35](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijless.7.1.35)

ABSTRACT

Leadership behavior is a behavior on the part of individual which influences the behavior of the other individual. Leadership, in the context of school management, refers to the process of managing the capacities of teachers, pupils and parents toward achieving common educational aims. This paper performs an analysis of research on key dimensions of effective leadership for school change and develops a build for positive leadership development within an organization. First, the analysis presents key dimensions of effective leadership and Second, role of effective leader for school change. The characteristic of effective leader reflects what leaders experience in organization when they perform their responsibilities. Effective Leader degree contains several aspects such as organizational demand, personal qualities, managerial behavior and environmental influence. Result of research indicates that the leaders are maintaining the distinctive leadership behaviors based on ethnical identity, especially in school situation. In the special case of education, teaching students has to be the central purpose that educational leadership must reflect. This paper identified the key dimensions of effective leadership that are: personal effectiveness, interpersonal relationship, managerial efficiency, operational effectiveness, societal effectiveness, mutual support, partnership and academic vision. The overall study is to support researchers in recognizing and understanding the need of effective leader for enhancing the quality of education and school effectiveness.

Keywords: Effective leadership, key dimensions, effectiveness, academic vision, influencing, context.



Introduction

Leadership may be exercised by those with formal positions of authority and less formally by individuals at any level or position within the school (Fink, 2000) and Ngcobo, 2005). The reality of a degree of flexibility about effective leadership is widely recognized in times of complex change (Fullan, 2003). It also draws attention to the contested nature of the term as it is caught between various interpretations on the part of different stakeholders with differing interests in the outcomes of the leadership process.

The first of these concerns the evidence concerning the often distributed nature of effective leadership in many contexts, i.e. that 'leadership in schools and colleges is not confined to head teachers and may be assumed by or dispersed to others including deputy heads, team leaders, curriculum leaders and class teachers' (Coleman, 1994). It is often argued that effective leadership for change relates to transformational capacity (Coleman, 2003, Day, et al, 2000) and to the ability of leaders to motivate their fellow professionals by transforming 'self interest into the interest of the group through concern for a broader goal' (Rosener, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2005).

Governance arrangements today highlight the need to attend to the collective dimensions of leadership (Ospina & Foldy 2015). The term 'collective' in 'the collective dimensions of leadership' implies viewing leadership as a phenomenon that implicates all members of a group rather than one or even several individual members. Because attention to the collective dimensions of leadership is a relatively recent development, the terminology is still in change. Collective leadership is sometimes used to describe forms that incorporate more than one person in the leadership role. Focusing on the space between the leader and the follower, some stress the relational nature of leadership, a collective quality that operates within interactions with others.

More recent research, however, has highlighted the importance of informal inputs for school leadership effectiveness including the role of sometimes conflicting values and the cultural dimension (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). This lays emphasis on the role of leaders in looking for to understand, negotiate and influence stakeholder values in relation to changing internal and external needs. Such a view also serves to underline the central role of human relationships in leadership and change management. This is because managing change often requires helping people to overcome barriers to change and this requires emotional intelligence and the fostering of meaningful relationships (Fullan, 2003). The emphasis on values also draws attention to the processes by which leaders get involved in order to influence values as much as the individual attributes possessed by leaders (Day et al, 2000); Fullan, 2003). In this model of effective leadership leaders support their values and vision with that of others to promote the continuing professional development of staff through teamwork, collaborative management, the provision of continuing professional development and critical reflection.

Educational leadership refers to the process of managing the capacities and vitalities of teachers, pupils and parents toward achieving common educational aims. They are thus responsible and accountable to make sure that education in their area is at its best (Spillane, 2006). What is far less clear, even after several decades of education improvement efforts, is just how leadership matters, how important those effects are in promoting the learning, and enhancing quality of education, and what the essential ingredients of successful leadership are. Lacking solid evidence to answer these questions, those who have required to make the case for greater attention and investment in leadership as a pathway for large-scale education improvement have had to rely more on faith than fact. In particular, it will investigate the role of leadership in enhancing quality of education (Baporikar, 2015).

Governance and management of education in Nepal is primarily undertaken by the Ministry of Education through various agencies under a highly centralized education structure where schools are managed by their head teachers and School Management Committees. The Education Regulation, 2010, Rule 93(1) (sixth amendment) states: 'There shall be a headmaster in each school to function as an academic and administrative chief of the school' (Nepal Law Commission 2002: 93). The regulation prescribes 31 different functions and duties for the head teacher. Above mentioned references six leadership dimensions for effective school leadership identified. Three functions relate to goal setting through preparation of the school's yearly, half-yearly and monthly school plans and programmes; two functions relate to building school culture by maintaining cooperation among teachers, students

and parents, and ensuring a respectful, ethical and disciplined school environment; and two functions relate to teacher support through selecting and recommending teachers to the District Education Office (DEO) for training programmes, and assigning jobs and responsibilities to teachers and staff. Aside from the above mentioned, the majority of the functions specified in the Regulation relate to routine management functions of the DEO and SMC. In short, the official expectations for principals place greater emphasis on routine management functions than on leadership. The official duties do not highlight the role of the head teacher in creating a vision, building community relations, mobilizing resources, team building, promoting collaboration, instructional planning and supervision, physical development (Hope Nepal 2005; Niruala, 2002).

Nepal has recently introduced policy reforms and programmes in an attempt to improve the educational quality of its public schools by maximizing community involvement in school management, which necessarily requires leadership with vision and commitment. However, the Education Regulation considers the school leader to be more 'an administrator than the visionary leader' (CERID, 2004). Researchers have discussed how the centralization of the education system in Nepal contributes to a lack of autonomy and decision-making power among public school head teachers (CERID, 2004; Mathema & Bista 2006; Sharma, 2013). Although local communities became directly involved in the school management process after the decentralization of education in the 1990s (Sharma 2013; Singh & Allison, 2016).

Despite policy constrains and challenges, researchers have identified effective school leadership practices prevalent among outlier public schools in Nepal which have made a significant positive impact in improving education quality and student outcomes. However, despite the significant quantitative growth, concerns over the poor quality of education have been rising in recent years (Bhatta 2008; Thapa 2012). The Nepalese government's three-year interim plan for 2013-2015 clearly identified school dropout and class repetition in all grades as causes for anxiety, and pointed to lower pass rates, poor quality of professional development among teachers, and lack of quality in public schools as major challenges for the immediate future (National Planning Commission, 2013). The poor quality of education in Nepal has seriously undermined confidence in the public education system, and this, in turn, has encouraged growth in private education (Carney & Bista 2009; Mathema 2007). Therefore, the main objective of this study is to explore the key dimensions of effective leadership in school effectiveness.

Literature Review

Research about leadership has evolved using various paradigms and searching for leadership characteristics (House & Aditya, 1997). Although, Plato is still the main thinker who influences western conception of leadership, other leadership contributors have made significant impact. Some of them use classical, contemporary and critical approaches to leadership (Grint, 1997). The currently used approaches include charismatic leadership (Conger and Kanungo, 1987), transactional and transformational leaderships (Bass & Avolio, 1990) and servant leadership (Spears, 2010). To be more effective, leaders must have multicultural understanding which acknowledge that managerial dimensions in east and west sides of the world can exist and also influence the perception of leadership excellence.

A group of researchers from six Asian countries (Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippine, Singapore and Thailand) explores the leadership questions by making categories. The category is based on balancing the international perspective rather than instrument with western literature. Four categories are identified, respectively *personal qualities*, *managerial behavior*, *organizational demand* and *environmental influence* (Selvarajah et al, 1995).

According to (Sibarani, 2013), the values such as respect to parent, collective orientation, harmony, care toward face saving, intimacy and religious orientation. Therefore, the knowledge

about culture and its effect are very useful for executives who work in an environment of multicultural business (Javidan et. al. 2006). Most slogan used of the term 'instructional leadership' although, there are several quite well-developed models carrying the title of 'instructional leadership' that do specify particular leadership practices and provide evidence of the impact of these practices on both organizations and students. Hollinger's model (2000) has been the most researched; it consists of three sets of leadership dimensions (defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive learning climate).

Anurit (2012) admitted that many researches overemphasize national dimension and minimize local population. Local wisdom is to be considered as the shape of leadership/managerial values which are actually undermined. The current research, thus, tries to ensure whether local wisdom value can support the establishment of leadership quality based on leadership excellence theory suggested by (Selvarajah et.al., 1995).

Methods of the Study

The article is based on qualitative information regarding the key dimensions of effective leadership for school change. This paper is based on literature review as a design of study. The introspective design that investigates a phenomenon, situation, or issue that has happened in the past (Kumar, 2009) was adopted to carry out the study. So, the study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. Secondary sources are included the websites, based on the document study, reviewed related articles, and journals in this study. Self-reflection of the researcher and self-study of the secondary sources of data are used as the tools for data collection. Consistent with our concern to investigate the underlying processes of leadership and to embed our understanding within an appreciation of the different contexts, adopted a qualitative study methodology. As suggested by Yin (2003), a qualitative study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, 'especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'.

Result and Discussion

Effective leadership plays an important role in managing school. Although leadership and management are two completely different aspects, an organization might be surprised to find that there is no one system that completely suits their needs, so it advisable that they focus on the skills that are suitable for their organization. Leadership is in charge of providing a clear vision and a systematic way to effectively achieve that vision, for if there is no leadership there is no change in organization management (Atkinson, 2015). Effective leadership is the best way to managing changes though it must be remembered that there are no problem solving solutions that are perfect and that issues will still be faced that cannot be fixed.

This study was consistent with exploring the key dimensions of effective leadership for school effectiveness with reviewed literature document, articles, and journals as given below;

Perspectives on Effective Leadership

Researchers have similar descriptions about effective leadership with different perspectives. According to the author's premises, the repeated move of one's perspective allows the true leader to adapt to the dynamics of an ever-changing environment. According to Quinn (1996) excellent leaders are internally driven visionaries who are able to 'see beyond technical competence and political exchange'. Quinn also identifies the positive leader as one who focuses within a formal moral system, attains power from a core set of values, provides behavioral integrity, is self-authoring, communicates symbolically with cohorts, is action-learning driven, and whose strategies are highly complex. In essence, the positive leader uses virtues as the foundation for their decision making.

According to Macintosh and Rima (1997), excellent leaders commit themselves to overcoming their dark side with a focus on attaining deeper spiritual understanding through our relationship. They clearly define the negative results of unmet needs during childhood which include compulsive, selfish, fearful, mutually dependent, and passive-aggressive leadership behavior (McIntosh & Rima, 1997). Ultimately, by living a life focused on virtues we are able to become better leaders and focus our resulting energies toward positive action, thus derailing dark leadership.

The rational systems perspective premises that specific leadership styles and behaviors result in specific organizational outcomes (Evans, 1996; Feliciano 2007). In other words, leadership and organizational performance are a cause and effect relationship that is highly correlated. The natural systems perspective asserts that both leadership style and organizational behavior are emergent issues that develop over time as a result of both internal and external factors which include leadership and many other variables related to the systems relationships (Chakraborty et al., 2004; Scott, 2003; & Talwar, 2005). The open systems perspective premises that both leadership styles and organizational performance are positively or negatively influenced by the alignment of the organization's structure and its strategy (Scott, 2004; Severino, 2005). Thus, when structure and strategy are not associated, the organization is negatively influenced because of the organization's inability to adapt to its dynamic external environment (Rivkin, 2004; Severino, 2005). As the researcher moves from the rational systems perspective toward the natural and open systems perspective, the emphasis on cause and effect between leadership and organizational change become less visible as many additional factors and variables come into play.

Effective Leader for School Improvement

The concept of effective leadership is often associated with the school effectiveness tradition. Within this tradition, 'effectiveness' has often been defined in relation to a quantifiable measure of outcomes such as exam results. Even as we acknowledge these critiques it is also the case that these outcomes are hard to assess and in the absence of relevant data we used improvement in academic achievement along with the perceptions of the ability of schools to manage complex change as key criteria for identifying 'effective' schools as a starting point. This relates to a second major criticism of the concept of effective leadership in that there is a danger that criteria that are considered to be effective in certain contexts (usually western industrialized contexts) are then taken to be universal. Existing studies have identified a range of factors associated with effective leadership (Sergiovanni, 2005; Fullan, 2003; Day et al, 2000).

Mulford (2003), however, has argued that at the same time as there may be universal characteristics in relation to what constitutes effective leadership and indeed effective education, these needs to be questioned rather than assumed. The need to develop a contextualized understanding of leadership practices in Africa and elsewhere is shared by other authors (Crossley et al, 2005; Oduro, 2006). Recognizing variation in local priorities and needs lends support to the view that effective leadership styles are dependent on context, i.e. '... there is no one package for school leadership: no one model to be learned and applied, regardless of culture and context'.

Key Dimensions of Effective Leadership

The natural and open systems paradigm works very well with the open systems and actor's perspective because of the open systems framework. This classic framework allows the researcher to focus on two specific aspects of leadership including the impacts that the leader has on the organizational system and its sub-systems and the leader as an individual actor in the organization. This dual perspective is very important in the development of the five key dimensions of leadership are as follows:

- i) **Personal effectiveness dimension.** The personal effectiveness dimension includes several important attributes and behaviors that must be widespread within the leader's attributes and behavior to ensure positive outcomes. Successful leaders must develop and enhance personal attributes and behaviors that include individual honesty, strong ethical system, tough mindedness, personal hopefulness, self- motivated, and goal oriented, focused on important issues, works toward self improvement, sets priorities setting, and uses effective time management (Covey, 1990; Crosby, 1992; Quinn, 2005).
- ii) **Interpersonal relationship effectiveness dimension.** It is importance for leadership success with interpersonal relationship effectiveness level. The attributes and behaviors in this dimension as they relate to other people include trust, sympathy, understanding, fairness, and objectivity, encouragement, guiding, and motivating (Quinn, 2005; Tichy & Sherman, 1994). Individuals who demonstrate these personal attributes and behaviors tend to become transformational leaders who are often perceived as charismatic and influential (Hofmann & Jones, 2005; Roussin, 2006).
- iii) **Managerial effectiveness dimension.** This dimension of effective leadership occurs at the managerial level. Specific individual attributes and behaviors associated with this dimension include team spirit, achieve productivity through people, delegate authority, and empower others, communication at all organizational level, demonstrates openness, seeks frequent organizational improvement, maintains a bias for organizational action, and creates high organizational values (Quinn, 1996, 2005).
- iv) **Operational effectiveness dimension.** This evaluation level is perhaps very important to all organizational stakeholders and related directly to overall organizational productivity. Important resulting outcomes in this dimension include quantitative measures like net profit, return on possessions, return on equity, and earnings per share. The successful leader is able to maintain consistent earnings and returns to shareholders.
- v) **Societal effectiveness dimension.** An effective leader maintains attributes and behaviors that have a positive impact at the societal effectiveness dimension. This dimension of evaluation determines if the leader or their organization positively impacted external stakeholders including the environment, communities, governments, provider, and consumers. The attributes and behaviors associated with this dimension address the leader's level of focus on environmental issues, community involvement, public relations, and environmental stewardship.

The leadership literature has increased attention to the key dimensions of leadership. According to Ospaña (2016) there are 3 dimensions of effective leadership are as follows:

- i) **From individual traits to styles and behaviors.** Leadership theories in popular culture give weight to the leader as the primary source of leadership. Leader-centered models identify personal qualities as predictors of effective leadership such as high internal locus of control, emotional maturity, and power motivation, among others. Individual behaviors, actions, and styles enacting these traits are clustered, codified, and measured at the individual level of analysis.
- ii) **From relationships to systems and emergent processes.** Theories giving priority to collective dimensions of leadership rely on different assumptions. In this collective space, leadership emerges as individuals interact and respond to others, with particular contexts shaping how leadership happens and the form it takes.
- iii) **From styles to relationships.** In reaction, relationship-centered and follower-centered perspectives become wider the focus of interest to dimensions like the quality of the leader-follower relationship itself. Leader-member exchange for example, claims that

high-quality relationships give up high levels of mutual trust, support, and obligation, thus influencing leadership effectiveness.

Recent theories claim that leadership does not reside exclusively in the leader but is also a property of the collective and thus has both individual and collective qualities. Collective leadership as trend, explains the shift away from leader-centered perspectives by associating it with the broad changes taking place in a postindustrial society and the organization of work.

Role of Effective Leader for School Effectiveness

For effective school leader (principals) to strategically improve schools so that teachers operate at the highest levels, leadership for school improvement must be the top priority. A leader's job has to be to help staff be reflective about the hope that is possible as a collective organization. Principal can create conditions for school effectiveness by the operations:

- Setting clear expectations for all teachers
- Providing external and internal supports for all teachers to meet expectations
- Organizing the instructional activities to create common planning for teachers
- Developing tools to help teachers collaborate on curricula, instruction, and student progress
- Creating mechanisms for instructional program coherence and consistency within the academic program
- Providing multiple entry points to learning for all teachers (e.g., shared reading, peer observations, and mentoring)

As instructional and organizational leaders, principals can influence student learning and school change by creating quality teacher learning experiences in systematic and meaningful ways. A leader's job has to be to help staff be reflective about the hope that is possible as a collective organization. The school principals who have successfully supported teacher effectiveness in the classroom which include are as follows;

- Collective participation and collaboration among teachers from the same school, department, or grade level (Sather & Barton, 2006)
- Commitment to continually attempting to realize the organization's ideal, mission and vision (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).
- A common instructional framework that guides curriculum, teaching, and assessment (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001).
- Allocation of such resources as staff members, time, and materials to advance the framework (Miles & Frank, 2008).
- Set in collaborative culture with a focus on learning for all students (Shellard, 2002).
- Sustained time and duration for collaboration and shared leadership opportunities among formal and informal leaders (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

Conclusion

Practicing collective leadership requires that effective leaders deal with their expectations for a valiant leader motivating and empowering followers. It means recognizing and fostering other sources from which leadership can emerge, supporting other participants to take up leadership, and designing distributed leadership processes and structures. Sometimes dual leadership structures allow two visible leaders to share authority and develop complementary roles for the network, one

more collaborative, and one more directive. An effective leadership perspective can thus combine collaborative and directive behaviors, weaving together a facilitative function attending to relation and a driving function attending to outcomes. A contextual orientation demands attention to the embedded assumptions influencing workplace interactions that reproduce leader-centric practices when the environment calls for more collective approaches to leadership. Effective leader can always improve the effectiveness of school.

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