

Ascertaining Leadership Styles Of Defence Funded Schools

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Abstract

Educational Leadership is identified as an important factor for quality education. Successful leadership is not the result of simply obtaining a position, but rather possessing the knowledge and understanding of successful leadership skills along with the personal ability to effectively implement those skills. Hence, School Principals need impressive skills to provide effective leadership in diverse school environments. Throughout the world, education policy makers are constantly looking for ways to prepare school leaders to deal with the complex challenges facing public education in the 21st century. Research has demonstrated a clear correlation between effective school leadership and student achievement. The purpose of the study is to explore the leadership styles adopted by Principals of Defence funded Schools and highlight research issues in relation to overall performance and Students achievements as conceptualized by Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model of Leadership (1991).

Key words: Leadership, Leadership Style, Defence funded Schools, , Parental Involvement

Introduction

Leadership continues to be a subject of study in the modern world (Zaccaro, 2007). The extensive research during the past six or seven decades has not exhausted the topic of leadership, on the contrary, it has discovered new aspects of leadership and opened uncharted territory for further study and research (Bennis, 2007). Leadership can be defined as a process that directs and organizes individuals (Kotter, 1990). Leadership is the art of weaving relationships in both an official and unofficial capacity and motivating others to evolve and grow, complete their work, and learn from the process. There are two aspects of leadership: the art of leadership, which involves vision, modeling, renewal,

judgment, power, and trust; and the science of leadership, which includes team building, communication, decision-making, conflict management, planning, and resource allocation. It is evident that successful leadership requires certain behavior, skills, abilities and even traits. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the study of leadership is the task of integrating theory and practice.

Leadership plays an indispensable role in effectiveness of an educational institution, right from the setting of goals to accomplishment of goals. In absence of leadership goal accomplishment and school effectiveness is never guaranteed. In order to achieve change and effectiveness in education, the role of Principal is often crucial. The Principal is challenged to create

the culture of quality that penetrates to the smallest elements, processes and the systems of an institution. It is common experience that under the same set of rules and regulations, with same set of teaching staff and students from similar background, an educational institution degenerates or maintains status quo, or rises to prominence with a change of Principal. This is also borne out by large number of research studies on management of change in Education.

Principals who are regarded as effective by both staff and school board members focus on both organizational goals and staff members' needs (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). The first characteristics can be labelled as "initiating structure" which endeavours to create a well-defined organization with clear tasks. At the other end of the continuum, there is "consideration" which entails sustaining a friendly relationship between the leader and the group, building mutual trust, respect and teamwork. For school administrators both types of leadership are essential.

Background of the Study In last couple of decades the defence funded schools such as Rashtriya Military Schools (05), Sainik Schools (24) and Rashtriya Indian Military College have not been able to deliver the envisaged results as desired and failed to feed adequate number of cadets to countries armed forces academies especially Nation Defence Academy. This has generated a debate in all the circles of decision making bodies of the government as well as the military think tank to take a stock of the situation and address the issues however super facial level changes were brought about and the community failed to pin point a variation of results in terms of the performance of cadets, teachers and the leaders like school principals. Thus there is an urgent need to determine the factors responsible for the drop in

performance and the study proposes to determine the gaps. The reason in question finally narrows down to the leadership and leadership styles adopted by the Principals. Therefore it is extremely important to determine the leadership styles adopted by the Principals of these schools and examine the impact on the performance of the schools.

Review of Literature

According to Bolman and Deal (2008) a *frame* is a cognitive framework, which helps us to determine what is important and what is not, what to see and what to do. Synonyms for frames are maps, images, schemata, frames of reference, perspectives, orientations, lenses and mind shapes. *Leadership frames* are used in a variety of ways in organization's to solve problems, to interpret events or to ignore matters which can be safely disregarded. Leadership frames influence which questions are asked, which information is collected, how problems are defined and what courses of action are taken. In 1991, Bolman and Deal developed frames for leadership. Firstly, the structural frame focuses on the importance of formal roles and relationships. Secondly, the human resource frame aims to make the organization fit its people's needs, feelings and interests. Thirdly, the political frame views organizations as political arenas in which resources are scarce and people compete for power. Lastly, the symbolic frame treats organizations as unique cultures which have rituals, ceremonies, heroes, and myths and it focuses on meaning, belief, and faith. The crucial aspect of the framework thinking is that leaders should know which frame to apply in a particular situation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the leadership styles adopted by Principals of Defence Funded Schools

Research Questions

- ❖ What kind of leadership styles are adopted by the Principals of Defence funded Schools?
- ❖ Do Principals consider themselves as effective leaders and administrators?
- ❖ Do the Teachers consider their Principals as effective leaders and administrators?
- ❖

Population, Data & Instrument. The population for this study is comprised of 20 defence funded school principals and 120 teachers in the country. Data was collected through Leadership orientation questionnaire developed by Bolman and Deal given to the Principals and their teachers, on confidential basis.

Results and Discussion

Principal Ratings in Relation to Leadership Frames

Leadership Styles	Level of Scores				Total
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	
Structural	0	03	02	15	20
Human Resource	0	0	04	16	20
Political	03	06	05	06	20
Symbolic	02	03	06	09	20

Table 1 : Leadership Orientations of the Principals

Table 1 demonstrates that the majority of the principals scored Relatively high on the four leadership frames. It can be inferred that the principals employ the four leadership frames according to self ratings. It is also not worthy that the majority of the principals use the human resource frame followed by Structural, Symbolic and political frame in their leadership practices. Principals' use of the human resource frame dominantly shows that they think that the schools must fit teachers' needs as organizations and people need each other otherwise organizations will exploit people or people will find ways to exploit organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1994). The principals think that they value relationships, feelings of the teachers and they try to lead through facilitation and empowerment. Previous research have also presented similar results about principals' attaching more importance to teachers' needs and skills than the school's goals and achievements (Erku, 1997).

Principals scored relatively low on the political and symbolic frames since they work in defence oriented schools which run under the The Ministry of Defence. The Armed forces and their constituents always remain apolitical being apolitical remains the foundation of the Indian Armed Forces thus the principals remain quite naïve when it comes to use of political frame. It is really difficult for the principals to exercise networking, building coalitions and power base s and negotiating compromises (Bolman & Deal, 1994). Moreover, in such type of education systems which remain defence oriented the principals do not really exercise visionary leadership which may be an indication of symbolic leadership. Further more, it is not feasible to expect them to focus on abstract issues such as meaning, symbols and faith as there is a scarcity of resources, tough financial regulations, tremendous amount of procedures and austerity measures due to the recession in the country which have more serious and crucial ramifications.

Level of Scores					
Leadership Styles	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	Total
Structural	01	06	09	04	20
Human Resource	0	02	12	06	20
Political	04	08	06	02	20
Symbolic	02	05	10	03	20

Table 2: Leadership Orientations of the Principals

As Table 2 indicates, the principals mostly use the human resource frame followed by the structural, symbolic and political frame. However, it is worth mentioning that the principals scored high on the symbolic frame and very low on the political frame which shows that they do not think that they are being political. This is due to the fact that being political has negative connotations echoing concepts such as power, networking and coalitions when compared with more human resource parts such as needs, skill and compromise and the basic foundation of Armed Forces ethos and doctrine is being apolitical. However, the public school leader has to be political and creative by building coalitions, negotiating with forces and constituencies of greater power (Cronin cited in Bolman & Deal, 1994). This result also shows the prohibitory influence of ethos and directives on armed forces personnel and its reflection on principals' political skills.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Leaders	0	0	0	03(15)	07(35)	10(50)	20
Managers	0	0	0	04(20)	08(40)	08(40)	20

Table 3: Principals' Ratings on Effectiveness as a Leader and Manager

Table indicates principals' self-ratings about their effectiveness as a manager and leader. The following explain what the number in cells represent:

- 0=no answer
- 1=ineffectiveness
- 2=average effectiveness
- 3=average effectiveness
- 4=effectiveness
- 5=effectiveness

As Table 4.2.5 shows, 03(15%) principals think that they have average effectiveness as leaders, 17(85%) principals consider themselves as effective leaders. On the other hand, 04(20%) principals think that they are average managers, and 16(80%) principals consider themselves as being effective managers. Nevertheless, if examined closely the scores concerning principals' effectiveness as a manager and leader are very close to each other, only differing slightly. This may be due to the fact that principals can not distinguish between the concepts of leadership and management so they assign similar values to the items which represent them. As Bolman and Deal (1994) state that the results of their study is a manifestation of two concepts:

leadership and management for the school principal ship are hard to distinguish as qualities of effective managers and leaders overlap.

	Leadership Styles				Total
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	
Structural	03	14	59	44	120
Human Resource	03	09	34	74	120

Political	10	55	31	24	120
Symbolic	19	56	22	23	120

Table 4: Teacher Ratings of the Principals' Leadership Orientations

As Table 4 shows

How teachers rated principals on the human resource frame the highest which is surprisingly parallel to

the principals' self-ratings. Moreover, teachers rated principals on the structural frame the second highest followed by the political and symbolic frames. It is interesting to note that the teachers rated the principal on the symbolic frame the lowest. This shows that the principal undermines the value of symbols. However, effective leaders value symbols and recognize the importance of articulating a vision that provides purpose, direction and meaning to an organization (Bolman & Deal, 1994).

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Leaders	12	02	04	06	58	38	120
Managers	06	03	03	12	49	47	120

Table 5: Teachers' Ratings of the Principals' Effectiveness as a leader and manager

The following explain what the number signifies present:

0=no answer 1

2=ineffectiveness

3=average effectiveness 4-5=effectiveness

12(10%) teachers didn't provide any data about principals' effectiveness as a leader, 06(05%) teachers think that principals are ineffective as leaders, 06 (05%) teachers think that they are average as a leader, and 96 (80%) teachers consider principals as being effective leaders. On the other hand, 06 (5%) teachers didn't provide any data about principals' effectiveness as a manager. 18 (15%) teachers think that principals are ineffective as managers, 12(10%) teachers think that they are average managers, and 84 (70%) teachers consider principals as being effective managers. 18 (15%) teachers did not provide any data about their principals' effectiveness as a manager and leader due to the fact that evaluating one's superiors is a delicate issue and the ratings may be exposed to the principals' eyes. Only 24(20%) teachers' rating principals as ineffective as a manager and leader may be explained by the same fear of their results' being made public. 18 (15%) teachers' rating the principals as average leaders and managers shows that there is a need for further development and training. Teachers' ratings of the principals' high effectiveness as a manager criteria shows that principals focus on mundane tasks such as allocation of roles, tasks and resources need to be achieved to achieve organizational goals rather than more

abstract concept such as vision, culture and interpersonal relationships (Day,2000).

Implications

In the light of this study,ever a implications are enumerated for consideration and implementation in the field of educational administration in the Defence oriented Institutions in India.

ImplicationsforPractice

1. The Principals of the defence funded schools should be trained to use not only the human resource and the structural frames but also the political and the symbolic frames as well .Asrecent research supports that effective leaders and effective organizations rely on multiple frames and perspectives.
2. This study provides an additional evidence to military authorities in selection and training their administrators. In-service training and development programs may be prepared In order to improve the leadership qualities of the educational administrators.
3. Seminars/Workshop swith respect to the recent trends in management strategies such as TQM (Total Quality Management), Emotional Intelligence and Strategic Planning can be conducted with the aid of the professionals and experts.
4. Principals may be educated about the difference between management and leadership.
5. Principals may be given more autonomy and freedom in their leadership practices.
6. The length of tenurespentina particular school may befixed to a maximum of 4 years as people

and practices may easily become routinized and ineffective.

ImplicationsforResearch

1. Additional investigations can be conducted through purposeful sampling which rendersacomparisoninterms of leadershipstyles adopted by Principals fromArmy ,Air force and Navy.
- 2.Further studies can be made by including variables such a seducational background of the principals, their teaching experience, educational background of the teachers and geographical location of the schools.
3. Another study may be carried out to investigate the differences between the leadership styles of Principals of Defence funded schools and other government funded schools such as Kendriya Vidyalaya ,Navodaya Vidyalaya etc in terms of leadership frames.
4. A similar study may be done with a larger sample which would enhance the validity and reliability of the conclusions reached.
5. This study can be replicated by administering the Leadership Orientations Questionnaire not only to teachers and principals but to supports affinthe school a swell.

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