Influences of Leadership Practices in Pakistan: Tensions and Dilemmas

Nadeem Ahmad Khan\textsuperscript{1}, Christopher Day\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, 3-6 September 2008}

Draft paper

Abstract

This paper reports the interim findings of the ongoing PhD research work carried out in Pakistan. It aims to study the reforms in education particularly in leading and managing schools of Lahore, Pakistan. The National Educational Policy 1998-2010 aims at raising achievement and bringing educational reforms in both public and private sector schools. The international literature on educational leadership and school improvement suggests that the headteachers (school leaders) have a key role in bringing about reforms at school level and that their practices are influenced by external policy, their own values and educational background. (Day et.al 2008, 2008 a). The literature on leadership suggests that the concept of leadership is very complex and it has different meanings in different contexts and cultures. (Yukl 2005, Hofstede 1984, Burns 1978, Avery 2004) In a small-scale study conducted in Lahore, interviews and overt observations were carried out in eight schools of Lahore. It is a combination of these which revealed a number of tensions and dilemmas. Headteachers appeared to be familiar about the rhetoric of leadership practices and school reforms, but seem to be influenced in different ways by their cultural background, religious values and beliefs, social milieu and the relative maturity of the own concepts and knowledge about school improvement as well as political influences, financial constraints, un-motivated staff, and pressure from local education departments. Private sector school headteachers also seemed to be under tremendous pressure from the parents and society for academic achievement in addition to the factors associated with public sector schools. The policy of creating local district education departments in addition to provincial education department appeared to have created more bureaucracy which held back the implementation of the Pakistan’s government policy of ‘devolution of powers to grass-root levels’.

\textsuperscript{1} Nadeem Ahmad Khan is currently working towards his Doctorate in the Teacher and Leadership Research Centre, School of Education, University of Nottingham UK Contact: tfxnak@nottingham.ac.uk
\textsuperscript{2} Prof. Christopher Day is the Director of Teacher and Leadership Research Centre, School of Education, The University of Nottingham
Introduction

Since the past few decades, Pakistan’s educational system has been widely criticized for the lack of reforms as suggested in the National Education Policy 1998-2010. The latest National Educational Policy of Pakistan NEP (1998-2010, p.3) reiterates the need to address the criticisms laid against the former policies. Despite the pledge of the current Government of Pakistan in the 1998-2010 National Education Policy to raise the level of public spending on education from 2.2% to 4% of GDP, the current figure released by the Ministry of Education for the year 2005-6, after 8 years of the pledge stands at 2.21% (MOE: 2007). This is a typical example of the gap between promise and practice that has led to criticism by majority of the researchers and ‘experts’ in the field of education (Siddiqui, 2007; Khan 2003).

The educational policy of Pakistan further warrants to provide the ‘good governance’ of institutions through intensive training of head teachers/principals and senior managers by the Provincial Institute(s) of Teacher Education PITE. The focus of such training would be in the area of ‘school management’ (NEP 1998-2010 p.52). One of the promises made in the Educational Sector Reforms 2005 report states that:

> The existing physical infrastructure would be strengthened, improved, rehabilitated and new infrastructure would be constructed on need / priority basis. Additional facilities would be provided for opening additional classes/ up-gradation of the existing institutions. For revamping of Science Education Science Labs and equipment would be provided to the existing secondary schools and equipment for workshops would be provided to all existing Secondary Schools wherein technical stream is being introduced during the plan period. (MOE: 2005).

This governmental undertaking, however, appears impractical to achieve, as no allocation of resources in the policy has been identified for the initiatives. Therefore, it can be argued that though the government’s policy documents contain plans for improvement without mentioning the means to achieve those. The table below suggests interesting insights into the physical conditions of state schools in Pakistan.
Table 1 Pakistani Public Sector Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Schools)</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (Schools)</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Schools)</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (Schools)</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Schools)</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (Schools)</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Wall</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Schools)</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the center of the chaotic political and socio-economic conditions lie the schools of Pakistan which await proper attention from the government for the past 60 years. Research in the western countries has established that the head teachers have significant role to play for schools to achieve the objectives such as an increase in pupil learning outcomes as well as over-all quality of teaching and learning (Day et.al 2007). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research in the field of educational leadership and management in Pakistan’s context. Simkins et.al (2003:275) also argue about the need of research in the area of school leadership in Pakistan’s context. This study aims to identify the reasons that hinder the reformed agendas. The precise research questions are:

1. What are the contexts (social, biographical, ecological etc.) that help/hinder head teachers of Pakistan in improving the standards and quality of teaching and learning in schools of Pakistan?
2. What leadership practices are prevalent in Pakistani schools? Are these similar/different to those in available through literature?
3. What factors influence school leaders’ practices in the schools?
4. What are the contextual differences in leading a state and a private school?

Before embarking upon the difficult journey of finding the answers to the questions posed above, there exists a need to open the issue of educational leadership in more detail in order to understand the contextual differences between the concepts.

Understanding Leadership:

Leadership is a complex concept and it has different meanings in different contexts and cultures. Yukl (2002: 4-5) argues that ‘the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others but there is no “correct” definition’. Leadership is not a concrete entity, but it is more appropriately regarded as a social construction that occurs in a historical and cultural context, and within the minds of the people involved (Avery 2004). Yukl (2006) has summarized several definitions of leadership from the literature encompassing the past fifty years. He argues that ‘in research …definition of leadership depends to a great extent on the purpose of researcher’. (Yukl, 2006 p.8). Most of the definitions are derived from the business models of leadership and later on tested in the discipline of education.

Middle (Schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>47.0%</th>
<th>48.0%</th>
<th>49.0%</th>
<th>50.0%</th>
<th>51.0%</th>
<th>52.0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Prior to 1950s, all theories of human management were derived from the models that were tested in industries; and there is a very less evidence for research in the area of educational leadership. (Heck and Hallinger 2005).

Despite the initiation of empirical research in the area of educational leadership, the influence of industrial model of leadership dominated the field of education for quite a long. The concept of leadership is still contestable in some of the debates about educational leadership. Hundreds of definitions have been presented by scholars since the discussion about leadership began in the western world in post-war period. The agreement, however, in more or less majority of definitions up to the late 1980s was on two points:

1. Leadership is a group function requiring human interaction
2. Leadership involves intentional influence on the behaviour of others (Crowther and Oslen 1997:6)

Burns (1978:18) definition of leadership closely matches the above stated criteria as he emphasized:

   Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilise, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers.

This notion of leadership has been named as ‘traditional’ and implies that leadership resides in individuals and it occurs when leaders do things to followers (Simkins 2004:4). This model of leadership still prevails in the under-developed world and schools are led through top-down bureaucratic approach derived from the model.

Late 1980s and early 1990s can be regarded as the era when most of the leadership styles, models, perspectives and frames sprang out from the literature published in the western industrialized countries. Experts in the field of educational leadership such as Fidler (1997), Leithwood & Jantzi (2000), Davies &West-Burnham (2003), Blair (2002), Cheng (2003), Crowther & Olsen (1997) Portin (1998), Simkins (2004) etc. came up with various types of leadership models such as: instructional Leadership, moral leadership, participative leadership, managerial leadership, post-modern leadership, interpersonal
leadership, contingent leadership, distributed leadership, curricular leadership, situational leadership, strategic leadership, educative leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, human leadership, cultural leadership, to name a few.

Some of the models mentioned above overlap with one another (such as curricular and educational leadership). Despite the fact that literature about different types of leadership is over-whelming, yet, there are few theoretical themes that could help us to link the models of leadership in a systematic way (Simkins 2004).

The literature also suggests that values at the core of the leadership roles in education. Values could be derived from narrow subjective beliefs or through discussion and debate about the common good. The societies in the under-developed counties struggle to agree on the values such as democracy, freedom of expression because, in such societies, values are grounded more in religious beliefs. (Shah 2006) argues that the concept of educational leadership varies across societies and cultures and the interpretations of leadership cannot be fully understood without exploring the philosophical and theoretical assumptions under-pinning the concept of leadership. In Pakistan, educational leadership is not value free. Leadership in Pakistani schools includes formal controlling systems inherited from the colonial rule in the Asian sub-continent. Due to instability in all facets of development, reforms never bear fruitful results (Memon & Wheeler 2000).

**Methodology of Study:**

After careful deliberations and discussions, the over-arching theme for collecting data was devised. Agreeing to the arguments of Hughes and Sharrock (1997) that the knowledge of persons could only be gained through an interpretive procedure grounded in the imaginative recreation of the experiences of others to grasp the meanings which things in the world have for them. The use of positivist paradigm in social phenomenon has been criticized by them as the stress that ‘positivist natural sciences type of method could not be used to gain adequate knowledge of social and cultural (p.99).

The study posed questions to probe an understanding about the meanings and ways in which school leaders operate in the contexts and the pressures they may feel in order
to meet the expectations of students, teachers, owners/governors and society. In order to address the research questions, the study was organized used multi-method approach of gathering data. The table below illustrates the purpose and the location of data required for the study and an overview of method used to collect the data.

Table 1: Roadmap for the Data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To find out the promises made by the Government of Pakistan regarding raising quality of teaching and learning in public schools</td>
<td>Library/Fieldwork</td>
<td>On-line sources for documents, visit to the Ministry/ Local Educational Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be acquainted with the ground conditions of different type of schools</td>
<td>Field work</td>
<td>Overt Observations in different type of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know the perceptions and influences of leadership practices of school leaders in the natural settings and to identify case study schools</td>
<td>Field work</td>
<td>Semi- Structured interviews and overt observations in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain the reasons for the differences of leadership practices in different type of schools</td>
<td>Case Study/Field Work</td>
<td>Interviews, overt observations, focus groups, documentary analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City of Lahore is divided into 12 sub-zones by the District Education Department. The exact figure of the number of private schools in the city was not available in the District Education Office. Only the number of public sector schools was known to the educational authorities. From each zone, one school was sampled keeping in view the
purpose of maintaining diversity, level of school (primary/middle/secondary) and gender equity.

As a result of the findings from the data retrieved during the first phase of study, four case study schools were selected which matched closely with the purpose of the study. In order to bring more perspectives to the findings, schools in the phase 1 were not used as case studies; rather further four schools were identified as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Schools</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>Primary, Middle and Secondary</td>
<td>2207</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Private Sector (Community School)</td>
<td>Primary, Middle and Secondary</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Private Sector (Franchise Chain School)</td>
<td>Primary, Middle and Secondary</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>Private Sector (Elite School)</td>
<td>Primary, Middle and Secondary</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within each case study school, head teacher and/or owner of the school were interviewed. Five teachers were selected within each school using purposive sampling technique, and they were interviewed individually. It was made sure that at least one teacher from each of the primary, middle and secondary group formed the sample for the study. In order to keep diversity, both experienced (working for three or more years) and recently appointed teachers were interviewed. One focus group session with a different group of teachers was also conducted. Three school children were also interviewed in each school.

Issues in the field:
Interviews were conducted primarily in English language wherever possible, and on some occasions, switching to the Urdu language was inevitable. However, the transcripts of the interviews were provided and read back to the respondents with translation. Transcripts of interviews were sent to the respondents and their approval has been sought before inclusion of their accounts in the thesis.

Translation was done wherever necessary and at the same time, the text in the original language (Urdu) has been written in Roman English style for any native reader of Urdu language to bring clarity to the meaning.

Brislin (1970) argues as a result of experimentation with 10 Pacific and Asian languages into English that quality of translators is a crucial factor who should not only be familiar with both languages, but also with the context of the material to be translated as well. In the next section I will comment on the some of the field notes in order to explain the context of schools under study.

Examples of Data from the field observations from phase 1 of the study:

**Case 1 (A private Sector School)**

School ABC Lahore is one of the private sector schools that are abundant in all parts of the city. Due to the absence of legislation to regulate private schools, their number increased and it has become a new phenomenon in the schooling. In almost every small town, one can easily find a school built on residential premises and owned and managed by locals in the community.

**Biographical Information:**

The ABC private school I visited is located in the urban area of Lahore city which is owned and managed by a local family. It was not a purpose-built school campus; rather, it is a small house which is converted into a school. The head teacher knew that I was visiting the school, so my visit to the school was not a surprise. When I approached the narrow passageway, it was hard for me to identify the ‘school’ since there was no sign-post for the school. While walking through the narrow walk way, I heard some noise
of children, and it was my hunch that I had approached the right building. Luckily I was standing in front of ABC private school Lahore.

The school had a long history and it started way back in 1968. The main mission of the school as portrayed by the head teacher was ‘to impart good knowledge with minimum expenses’. As I mentioned that the school was ‘family initiative’ – the current head teacher was the younger sister of the founder of the school who had retired from the headship and passed on the responsibility of running the school to his sister. The current head teacher started to manage the school when she had taken her secondary school examination (year 10). Later, she completed her degree while on-work; through distance learning. During my visit to the school, I observed some events which I believe would be worth mentioning to examine the context in more detail.

The total strength of students in the school as reported by the head teacher was 278 and the total number of teachers was 10. It caters the needs of children from pre-school age to year 10 public examination (at the age pf 15/16). The total number of classrooms in the school was 8.

Physical Conditions of the School ABC

I knocked at the door, and after a minute, a lady opened the door and I asked for the head teacher. The lady took me to the head teacher’s office. The head teacher greeted me with a smile on her face and offered me a seat. I looked around the room. It was a small room lit by one bulb and had all windows completely shut and covered with curtain cloth, as they were facing the walk-way. The principal had very basic furniture at her disposal. A simple desk and a chair, two visitor’s chairs, a telephone handset, some books and trophies lying in brick-shelves were all that was noticeable in the room. Next to the principal’s office was a shutter laid room which was used as
school tuck shop. The view of principal’s office from outside is shown in the below.

Figure 1 (ABC School Lahore)

After having her consent for the fieldwork, I started the interview which lasted for about 35 to 40 minutes. I also expressed my desire to visit some of the classrooms and to talk to some of the students and teachers which she very kindly acceded to. Walking out from her office was an open space covered with a canvass cloth. The space was used for conducting morning assembly in the school. The head teacher took me to the first room, which in her opinion, was the science and computer laboratory. In the lab, there were two computers which seemed old and non-functional from their appearance. There was a cupboard which had few chemical reagents in them, and some apparatus for conducting experiments was also visible. But the room appeared to be small and could hardly accommodate 5 people at a time. There were no water/gas connection points in the room, and I could not resist asking about that. To my surprise, the head teacher told me that they only show the apparatus to the children without performing any experiment with it, as the school could not financially afford to conduct experiments. A photograph taken would be helpful for the reader to have a fair idea about the facilities in the laboratory.
As I walked through the narrow and dark corridor, I saw two classrooms each, on the opposite sides, one of which was full of students but no teacher. The head teacher informed that her science teacher was not feeling well that day so the children were on their own and they were revising their lessons. The children very promptly stood up as they saw me and I spent some time asking them how they had been doing in the school. They had to look to the head teacher before they could reply to my queries. As I walked further through the corridor, I saw another room, which was closed from inside. The head teacher was reluctant to allow me access to the room, but when I insisted, she said that the room has been allocated to the peon to use as his residence. With her permission, I took picture of the room shown:

Figure 2 Laboratory Equipment ABC School Lahore
Figure 3: Room Adjacent to the classroom in ABC School

I asked why the room was in the middle of the corridor next to the classrooms. The head teacher informed that they had been facing financial difficulties and she had no space other than the room available for the peon who works as a night watch man for the premises as well.

**Facilities in the School**

The teachers and students shared common rest room which was in a very narrow pathway and the facilities were neither clean nor odour free. It was very difficult to breath through the path way. Head teacher felt somewhat embarrassed and she quickly asked me to go in another direction. But I very quickly managed to grab another image.
In the entire building block, I could not witness any playing area for children. Upon enquiry, the head teacher informed that there was no facility for physical play for the children outdoors, but they encouraged children to play indoors. I asked what sort of indoor games were allowed, as I could not see any equipment, the reply was that children can bring their games from home and play with them. I thought I got the answer and hence did not probe further.

**Classroom Routine:**

I was allowed by the head teacher to visit one of the classrooms. The classroom had basic facilities—two wooden benches in each row separated by a path in between, with three to four children sitting on each bench, and no desks at all. The room was lit by one tube-light, and everything in the classroom appeared a bit dark. I got permission for obtaining few photographs of the classroom, and was granted permission. The teacher was conducting a test, and children were asked questions in turns.
On my way back to her office, I witnessed her routine though I realize my presence would have some impact on her responses, yet it was inevitable. A parent knocked the window and asked to deliver lunchbox from the window of the principal's office for her child. The principal smiled, seeming a bit embraced, telling that she allowed parents to provide lunch at a later hour if they could not do so early in the morning. The total five of such incidents took place during my presence and head teacher picked lunch boxes from the window and kept them in her room. I enquired how would she sort out, but her reply was that children themselves recognize their lunch box, and that was a matter of routine.

She responded to a few visitors but she told them that she had a visitor (me) and asked them to visit again. On one account she ordered in a very loud tone to one of the teachers and asked her to refrain the children from getting to her office as she was busy.

From the above discussion, it appears that the school is running under financial constraints. The lack of infra-structure, scarcity of teaching/learning materials, poor health and safety/ sanitation conditions and absence of provision of physical facilities
appear to be some of the basic problems in the school. When head teacher was interviewed, she made expressed that:

"I am very much satisfied with my job..., our mission is to provide quality education in less money. I have tried to provide here the learning atmosphere present 'big names' to the children in this school. Schools such as Beaconhouse, Grammar who charge more than 20 times fee. I charge only Rs. 170 up to grade 5, Rs 225 for monthly tuition fee (£1.50 - £2) ".

School B is another private sector secondary faith school managed by two governors (real bothers of which one is the owner) and an advisory council comprising of five members nominated by the board. The school is located in one of the posh localities of Lahore. The school, however, is again in the midst of small houses and bounded within the residential home with slight modifications. The salient feature of the school is its Islamic ethos and all members of the female staff as well as the students were wearing full head-cover (hijab). The head teacher was female and she had obtained a degree in Education after her graduation. The office of head teacher was equipped with administrative furniture (no computers) and walls were decorated with display boards bearing students' work as well as quotes from experts and religious scholars.

The mission of school is to provide quality education to inculcate the ability to realize and recognize the ultimate goal of life –knowing the true creator (Allah) and to prepare the children for the day of judgement.

As mentioned above that the building was not designed for school, rather it was a residence converted into school with few alterations, therefore, all the rooms in the school were inter-connected and, in order to reach to some classrooms, one has to walk through others. School had basic facilities for children but there were no support facilities such as library or laboratories. Though the head teacher showed few computers in a room, but apparently, they were quite old. When I asked for a prospectus for the school, to my surprise, there was only one present in the school published in 1999 and I was only allowed to have its photocopy done. Prospectus
contained information mostly about rules and regulations and mentions facilities such as huge play grounds etc. in the school which I was not able to locate in the school.

During my visit to the school, while I was interviewing the head teacher, a person came in and the head teacher stood from the chair to greet him. She informed me that he was the owner of the school, so I greeted him too. He asked about few matters from the head teacher, and then left. When he left, there was a very strange revelation for me by the head teacher. At first she was hesitant to tell me but later she herself told me. She told me that the salary for the last three months for all her staff members was not paid by the owner. She further revealed that she was paying some members of staff from her savings to help them, and to save the school.

This was quite an unusual finding for me and I could not resist asking reasons. In the head teacher’s view, the school was running in loss and board of governors were not injecting funds to meet the salaries for the staff members and the condition was getting worse month after month. She said that she was in search of a new job and as soon as she could get one, she would leave the school.

**School C**

School C was a private sector school and located in the densely populated urban city area of Lahore. The school had population of 300 students and catered for both primary and secondary level education. The approach to the school is not easy and despite knowing the area, I had to ask several people about the direction. From the main road, there was a narrow entrance in a market place and after walking for about 15 minutes, a board appeared on a small house bearing the name of the school. As I had already contacted the head teacher for meeting that day, therefore, my visit was not a surprise for her.

But as the gate opened, the school revealed its condition to me. It was a dark corridor and on both sides were packed rooms children and benches. As I walked to reach the head teacher’s office, I could see teachers and students from the doors on either side. The school had no open space at all. At the end of the corridor, there was a stair case to my left and the head teacher’s office on the right.
I stayed with the head teacher for about two to three hours and during that time, kept on observing the events that were happening in the school. Though I realized that I could not get the whole picture in just one day, yet, I thought that it would be vital to see things happening on any typical working day. Head teacher did not allow any visitor in the office while I interviewed her formally, though at occasions, two teachers tried to enter the room, but she told them to wait in a loud tone of voice.

After the interview, she asked a teacher to accompany me to take look around in the school. The classrooms of the school were a bit dark for that time in the day with only wooden benches for children. The furniture I the school in C school matched with the furniture in the school A. Only one room was allocated for science laboratories with hardly any working equipment. This school also lacked facilities such as furniture, teaching resources as well as laboratory equipment.

**Major Findings:**

Head teachers in public sector schools are working in deplorable financial conditions and awaiting the delivery of promise by the government. They appeared to be hesitant to criticize the government policies openly and the data was obtained after assurances of strict confidentiality. Head teachers in four small-scale private sector schools appear to work without government support as they lack basic infrastructure needed for carrying out routine teaching/learning tasks.

The conditions of the public sector school were far different from those of private sector. The schools lacked basic physical infrastructure to carry out daily routine tasks. Teachers complained about the lack of facilities and lack of opportunities for professional development by the school administration. The absence of any professional head teacher qualifications were seen as a reason for isolated leadership practices in each school which are based on their own personal experiences, personality traits, (sometimes habits) and social and cultural values which are embedded in religious beliefs of the individuals.

Students in the public sector schools complained about the lack of facilities. Students despite constraints had high hopes for the future as they talked about their dreams but they were disappointed from the current educational system for failing them in reaching their goals. A comparison of the influences on the leaders’ practices in the case study school are shown below:
Private schools posed a variety of mixed picture. Of the three case study school, each of the school leaders had a unique set of practices. The Elite school posed the practices based on the values and mission of the NGO/trusts. There was a drastic difference in public and private education in schools which has wider implications on the society as a whole. There is a wide gap between privileged and the under-privileged members of society which had serious implications in terms of social disparity and social cohesion. In terms of methodological implications, it is argued that it is extremely difficult to carry out fieldwork research that aims to examine leadership practices in the Pakistan’s context. The access for research in both public sector schools is extremely difficult due to the lack of understanding towards research and also due to scarcity of research studies being carried out in the field of education as well as the awareness about the benefits associated with research. Researcher’s role is perceived either as evaluator or inspector, especially when the researcher is reported to work in a foreign university. This finding is in confirmation with an earlier study conducted in Pakistan’s context. (Khan and University of Oxford. Dept. of Educational Studies. 2005).

The paper finds that that there is a need for understanding contextual factors that hinder leadership practices to bring any form of school reforms if schools to improve. More importantly, it finds that the shared and distributed leadership practices which are key feature of much reform in western countries may not be transferred to the contexts
in Pakistan. The study seems to confirm the stance that ‘westernized’ ideas of educational choices and leadership processes cannot be transplanted in countries that differ significantly in terms of political policy, context and culture. (Hofstede 1996, Leithwood & Hellinger 1996, Cowie and Crawford 2007).

References:


Allix, N.M.(2000) Transformational leadership democratic or despotic. Educational Management and Administration BEMAS Vol. 28 No.1 pp. 7-20


This document was added to the Education-line database on 17 September 2008