Implementing Pedagogical Leadership for Professional Development of Teachers in Public School at Elementary Level in Pakistan

SIDRA NOREEN[1]
PhD Scholar, Department of Education
AIOU Islamabad, Pakistan
MUHAMMAD ASIF[2]
PhD Scholar, School of Foreign Languages
Shanghai University, China

Abstract

The study aimed to explore challenges that are involved in the successful implementation of pedagogical leadership for the professional development of teachers in public schools at the elementary level in Pakistan. It was a qualitative study based on phenomenological design 12 principals and 20 teachers were selected through stratified sampling technique from 12 elementary public schools from Rawalpindi and Islamabad region in Pakistan. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with teachers and principal individually. The study indicated that teachers are facing challenges for their professional development that are lack of technical facilities for classroom teaching, improper school infrastructure and ineffective professional training. Moreover, challenges for principal are a gap between curriculum design and its practical implementation, lack of teachers' knowledge about teaching strategies, parents and

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[1] Ms Sidra Noreen is a PhD scholar in the department of Education from Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Her research interests are educational technology, pedagogy and leadership. She presented research papers on digital technology, pedagogy and leadership as well and her first paper was also related to digital learning for distance learning.

[2] Mr Asif is a PhD (Linguistics & Applied Linguistics) Research Scholar of Shanghai University of China. He has obtained his M Phil degree in Applied Linguistics from University of Management & Technology Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. He is the author of several articles published in reputed journals and is a member of different international research groups.

teachers reluctant for change. It was recommended that pedagogical leadership in these public schools can be successfully implemented through relevant pre-service and in-service future-focused professional learning programs, the link between school teachers and parents through proper communication, developing effective leadership qualities in Principals through refresher courses and workshops and annually a review of the curriculum within the involvement of stakeholders.

Keywords: Pedagogical leadership, professional development, challenges

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Pedagogical leader mainly focuses on teaching and learning along with administrative and financial tasks of the school, which in turn make professional development of teachers more effective. Unfortunately, in public schools of Pakistan Principals are facing many challenges in implementing pedagogical leadership because in these schools the main focus is on quantitative value of learning instead of its quality. This led the Principals of the schools to focus on managerial and financial areas more than effective teaching and learning process. The study of Retallick and Farah (2005) found that for successful and useful headship in school, it is required to make principals as pedagogical leaders for the professional and academic development of teachers.

Pedagogical leaders give preferences to the teaching and learning process by giving his or her under position teachers a lot of opportunities for their professional development. As Davis (2005) also demonstrated that pedagogical leaders make possible professional development. Professional development opportunities for teachers are identified by Parkinson (2002) in schools are: attending courses, sharing ideas with colleagues, working in partnership with others and talking new responsibilities. These opportunities help the teachers to practically apply theoretically learned knowledge that increases their professional development.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the challenges of professional development faced by teachers at the elementary level in public schools.
2. To explore the challenges faced by Principals of public schools in implementing pedagogical leadership for the professional development of teachers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Findings of Male (2006) study indicated that pedagogical leadership is an effective alternative of other leadership styles which improves schools through human-capital development. For that purpose responsibilities and support is given to the teachers.

The study of Retallick and Farah (2005) further added that pedagogical leaders perform many task and roles for the professional development of teachers. Sergiovani (1998) further demonstrated that pedagogical leadership spends in capacity building through the professional development of teachers. According to Male (2006) professional leader works with staff to clarify and expose the critical skills and content. The leader also provides teachers with enough time to plan together and to evaluate what the area doing instructionally, keeps parents encouraged in the academic life of the school and procures the recourses that are necessary for teachers to teach efficiently.

Pedagogical leadership has a more extensive view because a pedagogical leader has credibility with stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, schools broads, the community and the system administrators) to make the school a successful learning community (Saddique, 2007). The writer further explained that public schools are facing many challenges or issues in implementing pedagogical leadership like curricular materials and lack of job-related training for teachers.

In Pakistan lack of pedagogical leadership appears to be the main reason one that is affecting the major value and worth of education. Memon (2000) stated that there is a need for building headship and administration capacity in schools. Despite the participation of Principals in professional development programs,

most of them still work as administrators rather than leaders. They have to face many challenges that consist of, unfair role of headteachers, no precision and understanding of functions, without proper headship qualities, ineffective professional development programs, lack of professional autonomy, interfering of political leaders in school affairs, prevalence of autocratic leadership, recruiting principals on seniority bases, considering schools as administrative organizations and excessively use of top-down managing structure. These challenges have become chief unsure hurdles to successful pedagogical headship at the school level.

The effective parents-teachers relationship is also a challenge for the professional development of teachers in public schools. Retallick and Datoo (2007) also argued that school-parents relationship and its importance in the educational process are indistinctly understood in Pakistan. Schools often contact with patents for a teacher and parent gathering to update them about their child's report in the classroom, to rebuke parents about their child has broken down school's discipline and for fee payment of their children. Parents mostly do not collaborate, so teacher-parent relationship although, it is growing has become fixed because of the problem of disbelieve and without clarified roles.

Moreover, teacher education programs are lacking practical relevance with the job-related task. Teachers find it difficult to solve their job-related problem and headteachers do not have the competency to lead her or her under position teachers. This indirectly makes a high difference in the present and expected to learn outcomes. The findings of (Ram, 1999; Zenija, 2011) studies found that in-service education for teachers is often misunderstood to include collegiate and school-based programs of professional study and work in which teachers are involved after they are corticated and employed. Furthermore, in-service programs often fail because schools do not have sufficient resources.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study was qualitative based on phenomenological design. The main focus of the study was to have in-depth data related to the

pedagogical leadership challenges faced by teachers and principals of public schools.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of the present study was comprised of 34 principals and 146 teachers of 34 elementary public schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad regions. Stratified sample technique was used for the selection of the sample. For this purpose 12 schools (boys=6, girls=6) were considered as stratum through proportional allocation. The sample was selected from each stratum. From which 15 principals and 20 teachers were selected from these schools. The sample was comprised of both male and female without specifying subject areas.

Table 1 Demographic presentation of respondents is given below:

S.#	Category	Islamabad		Rawalpindi		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Teachers	5	5	5	5	20
2	Principals	3	3	3	3	12

3.2 Research instruments

Two separate semi-structured interviews were used as a tool for data collection. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with teachers and principals individually. Both interviews were built around 12 questions. Question 1 was about general information regarding service or job experience and questions 2 to 12 were about challenges related to the successful implementation of pedagogical leadership for the professional development of teachers.

3.3 Validation of Instruments

Item content validity Index (I-CVI) was done to validate the research instrument. Five experts in educational leadership and management were invited to categorize each question according to the objectives of the study in the following way: 1-least relevant, 2- relevant, 3-need deletion and 4-most relevant. According to the judgments of the expert's question, 13 was deleted from the interview for teachers. The below table is indicating content validity:

Table: 2 Content Validity of Research Tools

S.#	Categories	No. of experts	No. of items	I-CVI
1	Interview for teachers	5	12	.85
2	Interview for principals	5	12	.88

3.4 Data collection

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with interviewees individually. Interviewees were informed before conducting interviews through emails and telephone calls. Probing questions were also asked for additional explanation. Interviews were recorded by a voice recorder. Collected data was analyzed through inductive analysis by applying themes. The emerging themes were categorized and were critically analyzed. The inductive analysis thus aims at discovering the categories, themes and patterns in the dataset (Patton, 2002).

4.   DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

This section of the study present responses of teachers and principals which were separately presented below:

4.1 Challenges Faced by Teachers for their Professional Development

Professional development must provide teachers with the opportunity to attain new information, to practice in applying this information, to seek the comments of their colleagues and to have ongoing support in maintaining these newly adopted practices. This includes an effective relationship with their colleagues and parents (Snell and Swanson, 2000). However, in public schools, teachers face difficulties to e.g. teachers do not have enough time to collaborate on shared school vision and to incorporate new strategies in their instruction for overcrowded classrooms. The major challenge for teachers for their professional development is related to a lack of appreciation for group work, non-involvement in the development of instructional strategies. Professional development of teachers is mainly depended on the involvement of teachers in shared school vision. As a skilled teacher affect the entire school system.

        The opinions of teachers related to in-service job training indicated that there is a big difference between professional training

courses and practical implementation of learned skills and knowledge. Teachers required instructional opportunities to effectively deliver their knowledge to the students. Teachers viewed that they lack technical facilities in public schools. Teachers cannot use technology during their classroom teaching according to the requirement of the subject. Along with this teachers do not have sufficient time to use different approaches in their instruction to accommodate the learning of all students and they usually use the lecture method to make the concept clear to the students

Teachers also viewed that there is a great difference between teachers professional training courses and curriculum material, so that teachers find difficulties in its practical instructional planning and strategies, as most of the teachers do not have full command over subjects.

4.2 Challenges for Principals in Implementing Pedagogical Leadership for Teachers' Professional Development

Principals of public schools mostly involved in management task neglecting the teaching-learning process. They cannot give extra time to the teachers in explaining them their instructional tasks as they have a lot of administrative work to do. This is what Memon (2000) explained that Principals in Pakistan now act as managers more than pedagogical leaders.

Another prevailing challenge is that there is a lack of proper parent-teachers relationship. Parents are mostly less cooperative, they are reluctant for new innovation in teaching methodology or instructional strategies. Parents teachers relationship, parents only concerned with annual results and do not cooperate in daily base activities.

Most of the principals viewed that there is a lack of technical facilities in these public schools. There is a lack of latest technology facility for teachers to be used in the classrooms. Teachers mostly complained about the lack of computers and audio, video facilities for giving instruction to the students. Most of the time teachers face electricity shortage during teaching, so they cannot give the proper attention or effective delivery of their knowledge to the students. Classes in these schools are overcrowded and teachers find it inconvenient to effectively implement pedagogical strategies during

their instruction. Coleman (2001) also demonstrated that schools with a large number of students do not allow principals and teachers to effectively implement pedagogical leadership for professional development.

Principals of public schools viewed that there is a gap between curriculum design and implementation process as the curriculum is overcrowded and teachers try to cover it before annual exams without practical implication or innovation in it. This is what Sadique (2007) also demonstrated that curriculum is not revised properly and teachers are not involved in all stages of curriculum development which is going to be implemented. Another factor is that most of strategies and methods that teachers have exposed are unfamiliar to their context because these strategies and methods may be useful in other country but may not be useful in that context which they are supposed to apply. So when those teachers go back to their classrooms they see that there is a clear difference between they have taught and what they supposed to teach.

Along with this, there is a difference between professional training and practical implication of instructional strategies according to the school learning situation that is why most the teachers are reluctant to go for annual training or refresher courses.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that teachers in public school are facing challenges for their professional development that are lack of group work, ineffective training on teaching methodologies, overcrowded classrooms and their less participation in instructional strategies. However, the challenge for principals are the reluctance of teachers and parents for change in the teaching-learning process, the gap between curriculum design and its practical implementation.

Findings of the present study consisted with the finding of previous studies (Andrews, 2009; Robinson, 2011; Harris, 2003; Fishman et al, 2003; Butler et al, 2004; Sharma et al, 2008) that professional development of teachers of elementary level is failing because of not creating conditions for teachers to have a better understanding of tasks, lack of skill and knowledge about teaching-learning process. Professional development of teachers can be done

through effective pedagogical leadership. Professional development of teachers is dependent on effective leadership of school headteacher or principal. It is on heads of institutions how they utilize resources of institutions and skills or potential of teachers for the betterment of their academic staff and indirectly whole school improvement.

Most of the Principals of public schools are performing their roles as managers rather than mentors. Managing the school activities is not sufficient, professional development of teachers demand from principals of these schools to get involved in their under position teachers in teaching and learning process so that they can themselves implement knowledge practically. Heads of school not only have to perform as managers but also as mentors to help the teachers in setting up their classrooms objective and their successful implementation. Pedagogical leadership can be successfully implemented in public schools if challenges faced by these schools are removed or solved as the professional development of teachers is closely linked with effective leadership of the head of school.

Moreover, the study revealed that professional development programs have to make more effective through practical relevancy of curriculum with job tasks. Most of the teachers and Principal feel frustration when they do not find positive job environment to practice their learning experience in teaching and administrative fields. These challenges can be overcome if teachers and Principals have pre-service and in-service teaching-learning programs and recruitment tests for appointing heads of these schools related to their field instead of giving them leadership position on their job experience or occupancy.

The study also revealed that physical facilities in public schools are less or either in pathetic form. Most of the schools have a lack of audio-video technology and proper physical setup. Teachers of the schools find incontinent to incorporate new instructional strategies to be used during their instruction for better learning of students.

The study findings of the study agree with the study of Hoodbhoy (1998) who indicates that the present education system is affected by the lack of sound management, leadership and governance principles. In public schools, heads and teachers are facing many challenges. There is a need to have national-level learning opportunities for teachers to provide them a full-fledged learning environment for their professional development. The study also

indicates those challenges that are being faced by almost all public schools and pedagogical leadership can be the best exercise if these challenges are removed from these schools for the professional development of teachers.

There are some common challenges that almost all public schools are facing either these are related to administrative or academic tasks. If a school has to improve it is important for a Principal to focus on the professional development of teachers and it can be possible only if challenges are removed or solved.

5.1 Recommendations

The study recommended that

1. There should be relevant and future-focused professional learning programs for teachers and Principals on teaching methodology and leadership skills. Principals' professional program must include roles such as mentoring and coaching to increase teachers' competency in the teaching-learning process.

2. Pre-service preparation and professional development are essential to help all educators more competently address the learning needs of every student. Effective leadership qualities in Principals maybe incorporate through refreshers courses and workshops.

3. Community and other stakeholders must involve in the school activities of operations, monitoring and actions for effective teaching and learning. There should be a link between the principals of schools and higher authority through proper communication channels.

4. There should be annual a review of curriculum, teaching materials and methodologies. Principals and teachers must be allowed to take part in the curriculum design process of educational programs.

5. Teachers should be allowed to develop their own instructional material according to the requirements of subject content and incentives should be given for this purpose to appreciate the teachers for innovation in their teaching strategies.

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