

A Study of the Leadership Style of Women Principals and Perception about them from their Teachers

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Abstract

A women's role in modern India is said to be phenomenal. Women's leadership qualities have ensured that they have evolved from being a master home maker to forces that shape the country. According to Rosener (1995), the increasing numbers of women in leadership positions and in academics, brought dramatic changes in the society. The purposes of present study were to identify the leadership styles of women principals in secondary schools of Vadodara city & to study the perceptions of teachers regarding the leadership qualities of their principals. Multistage sampling was followed. In the first stage 29 grant-in-aid schools, from four Shala Vikas Sankul having a female principal were purposively selected and in the second stage 3 to 5 teachers from each of 29 schools were randomly selected. A total of 133 teachers were randomly selected to study their perception towards the leadership qualities of women principals' from secondary schools. Self made rating scale was used to identify the leadership style of women principal. Standardized Perception Scale measuring principals leadership qualities was administered for collecting data from the school teachers. The study reveals that most of the women principals have adapted a democratic leadership style. The study also checked the perception of the teachers towards the women principals in secondary schools of Vadodara City. Most of the teachers perceived that the woman principal as visionary, lifelong learner, academician, effective communicator, strong role model, community leader, mentor and motivator, human resource manager, care taker, administrator and technocrat.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational leaders today are entrusted with the difficult task of creating school cultures that support academic success for all students. Highly skilled teachers and educators are required to meet the students needs, for example, Accountability measures, the influence of poverty, and the diversity of learners within the school. To accomplish such challenging task, today's educators need to have clear vision and be excellent communicators.

When thinking about a school headship, the first image that comes to the mind is often that of the principal. School principalship is a position known to the world where there are challenges and difficulties including experiences that differ a lot. As the head of school, the principal plans, organizes, directs, makes decisions and evaluates all activities within the school. Yet, in most cases, The school principal is neither involved nor consulted regarding the recruitment of teachers, and has even lesser impact on the pedagogy of the teacher in classroom. However, Many actions and decisions depend on him or her and have a direct impact on school, students and teachers. The principal is primarily responsible for the operation and concerns of his or her school and students. According to Baume-Schneider (2008), investigation on the factors usually associated with school achievement specified unequivocally the role of management is a determining element of the mobilization capacity of teaching staff, associated with the high level of students' performance. This means that the quality of leadership and recognition of the "Principals" is now considered an essential criterion for healthy school. Thus, because of that principal's leadership style influence the work of all school members including teachers, the staff and student learning as well. However, school leadership is not really a simple activity. It requires multiple and strong skills, regardless of gender.

Good leadership has an impact on employee morale and performance. The essential traits in leadership roles impacted morale and a greater awareness of these traits for females, and their

connection to employee performance and morale, would allow for identification, and if warranted, change (Eagly et al., 2003).

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2008) defined leadership as the identification, acquisition, apportionment, management and use of social, material and cultural resources that are the prerequisites for teaching and learning. It also involves mobilizing students and staff to identify and rein in educational reforms.

A women's role in modern India is said to be phenomenal. Women's leadership qualities have ensured that they have evolved from being a master home maker to forces that shape the country. According to Rosener (1995), the increasing numbers of women in leadership positions and in academics, brought dramatic changes in the society.

The literature on women in educational leadership states that women's leadership style focuses on social justice, and has unique characteristics like power sharing, teamwork, fostering, and an ethic of care (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Haar, 2002; Strachan, 1999). This leadership style arguably aligns with the identified characteristics required today to effectively lead (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This leadership style also parallels transformational leadership, a leadership theory garnering much attention in leadership literature as both an effective leadership style and one that women tend to exhibit more than men (Eagly et al., 2003; Northouse, 2010).

Women who have become leaders or heads of institutions have successfully broken the barriers that traditionally stand in the way of women seeking career advancement. They have gone beyond the great divide. They have also broken the "glass ceiling" and have taken up leadership positions with the additional possibilities for power and influence they bring (Beck & Steel, cited in Oyeniran R & Anchomese I B, 2018).

Leadership positions, when held by women offer insights into the personality of successful female leaders and the impact of gender-specific personality traits on workplace morale and employee job satisfaction (Caliper, 2014). Multiple indicators showed that women enacted their leadership roles with an aim of producing outcomes that could be described as more compassionate, benevolent, universalistic, and ethical, thus promoting the public good (Eagly, 2013). Rowland (2008) discovered that some people found female administrators to be more supportive, approachable, sensitive, understanding, nurturing, organized, creative, and receptive than male principals, which were attributes that emerged when female leaders did not feel the pressure to act and 3 behave like a male leader. Courageous female leaders found their voice, experienced moral courage, and allowed themselves to be vulnerable (Ali, 2015).

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Teachers are the one who are closely associated with the principal and conduct their day to day activities in close coordination with the principal. Hence, who better than them can understand the principal and their leadership styles. The principal's working style has a direct correlation with the working of teachers and the teachers know the various roles that the principal plays and where conflicts can be resolved. In due course, the process of evaluating the principal's leadership qualities will be an ultimate benefit to the institution as a whole. Teachers are an intimate part of the educational system. The perception of teachers varies with age, working environment, experience, educational qualification and gender.

By examining the perceptions of teaching staff about women leaders and feminine leadership, perhaps educators can bring hope and encouragement to many female teachers who may be uncertain at their career aspirations in administrations. Therefore, investigators took up the study of women leadership styles with particular emphasis on the perception of teaching staff.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the leadership styles of women principals in secondary schools of Vadodara city.
2. To study the perceptions of teachers regarding the leadership qualities of their principals.

POPULATION

For the study all the secondary schools having women principals and the teachers working in these secondary schools of Vadodara city following the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board, including Grant-in-Aid and Non-Grant-in-Aid falling under Sankul no. 4,5,6,7 was constituted as the population.

SAMPLE

In the study, Multistage sampling was followed. In the first stage 29 grant-in-aid schools, from four Shala Vikas Sankul having a female principal were purposively selected and in the second stage 3 to 5 teachers from each of 29 schools were randomly selected.

A total of 133 teachers were randomly selected to study their perception towards the leadership qualities of women principals' from secondary schools.

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION

The tools used in the present study were

1. Rating Scale for Leadership Style:
Self made rating scale was used to identify the leadership type of women principal.
2. Perception Scale measuring principals leadership qualities for teachers

To achieve objective 2, the researcher has used standardize tool, the tool was perception scale measuring principal leadership qualities for teachers. This tool was constructed and standardize by Mehta (2015). The tool had 10 components which were based on various qualities of principals. There were 88 items in total based on 10 components of leadership qualities i.e: visionary, lifelong learner, academician, effective communicator, strong role model, community leader, mentor and motivator, human resource manager, care taker, administrator and technocrat.

DATA ANALYSIS

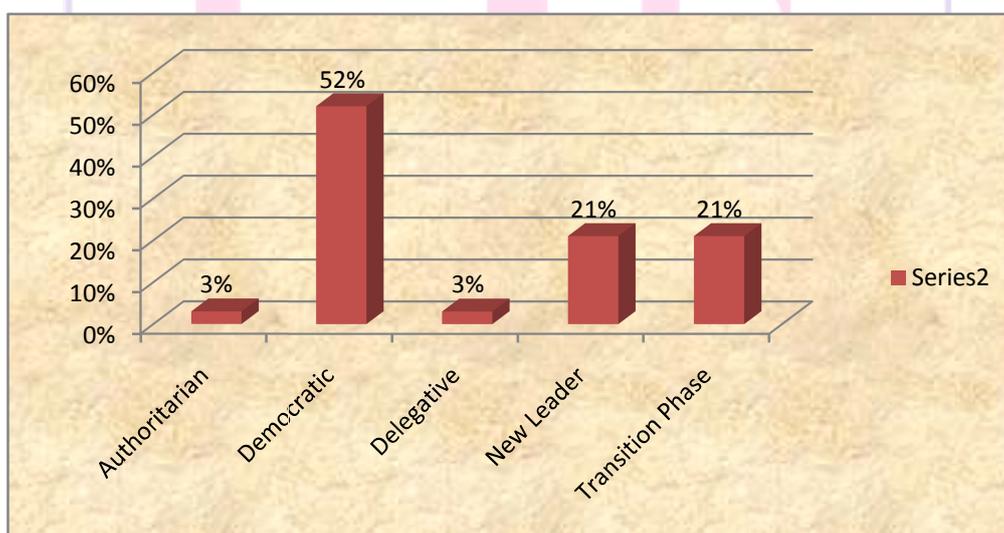
As the data was quantitative in nature, frequency and percentage techniques were used for the data analysis.

MAJOR FINDINGS BASED ON LEADERSHIP STYLES OF WOMEN PRINCIPALS

The investigator categorised significant findings and conclusions based through rating scale administered on secondary grant in aid school principals of Vadodara city to identify leadership styles of women principals as under.

1. It was found that the majority of women principals (52%) working in grant in aid schools used Democratic Leadership styles.
2. The present study shows that 52% of women principals, i.e. 15 out of 29 used Democratic leadership styles.
3. Very few, i.e. 3% of women principals used Delegative leadership styles.
4. Moreover, 3% of women principals used Authoritarian leadership styles.

OVERALL PRESENTATIONS OF THE WOMEN PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP STYLES



DISTRIBUTIONS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ACCORDING TO PRINCIPALS

From the above table , it can be observed that out of total women principals 52 percent principals used democratic style of leadership, 21 percent were new leader because there was an only small difference between the three scores of leadership styles. This indicates that the principal has no clear leadership style and was experimenting various styles. Whereas 21percent of principals were in a transition phase either personally or at work. Very few women principals, i.e. 3 % each used authoritarian or delegative leadership style.

MAJOR FINDINGS BASED ON TEACHERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Significant findings and conclusion based through the perception scale administered on secondary teachers of Vadodara city towards women leadership qualities were drawn out and were categorised by the investigator as under

1. Most of the teachers (91.84%) strongly perceived women principals as visionary. Teachers perceived that women principals have a clear vision about growth, they can share their vision with management, staff, parents.They could anticipate infrastructure needs.
2. Most of the teachers (89.29%) perceived women principals as a lifelong learner; Teachers perceived that women principals upgrade their knowledge and qualifications,interact with educationists, organised sessions for guiding parents, learns from numerous educational websites, encourage reading habits in teachers. they spend time in reading newspaper, educational journals and developreflective practice to analyse strengths and weakness of self through experiences.
3. Most of the teachers (87.45%) strongly perceived women principals as academic leaders because they took keen interest in curriculum development, visualised academic needs of children and adopted changes, observed teachers classes and suggested methods to improve classroom learning output,analysied strength and weakness of teachers and guide them, evaluating the lesson plan prepared by the teachers, encouraging remedial classes, bringing sound evaluation patterns for students, encouraging teachers for organising extracurricular activities, adopting new courses and technologies for teachers.

4. Most of the teachers (90.69%) strongly perceived women principals as an effective communicator because they shared values, goals and policies of school, acted as a mediator between trustees-teachers, taking all the stakeholders in the process of decision making, assigning and assessing the task for teachers, developed a team spirit of cooperation and maintained transparency and consistency.
5. Most of the teachers (88.64%) perceived women principal as a robust role model because they were punctual in completing activities, were emotionally stable, had a pleasant personality, were non-biased, had strong and moral values, were assertive in every field of life, had quest for knowledge and attaining it, were respectable and had dignified name in the society.
6. Most of the teachers (82.03%) perceived women principals as a community leader because they identified the needs of the society, knew the major current issues of the society, they seek funds to reach deprived sections of the society, organised event that helped in community development, encouraged teachers to visit various NGO's, were sensitive to social issues and encouraged every stakeholder to work for society.
7. Most of the teachers (89.14%) perceived women principals as a mentor and motivator because they created opportunities for teachers career development, advised teachers to attend different seminars for their professional development, appreciated for extraordinary work done by the teachers and encouraged teachers to take the initiative in curricular and co-curricular activities.
8. Most of the teachers (87.39%) perceived women principals as a human resource manager because they acted as a bridge between trustees and teachers, analysed the strengths and weakness of teachers, were aware about the 'Top-Down' model of the Management Information System', maintained a harmonious working atmosphere, motivated all to perform and give the best of their potential and had ability as an expert of career counselling for teachers.
9. Most of the teachers (87.81%) perceived women principals as a caretaker because they took keen interest for maintenance and development of infrastructure, seek interest for the welfare activity of the teachers, ensured health and safety measures of teachers, conducted induction programmes for new teachers, could maximise the utility of the available resources and could establish an appropriate disciplinary procedure for the teachers.

10. Most of the teachers (88.34%) perceived women principal as an administrator and technocrat because they could deal with complexity, had uncertainty and ambiguity, could handle multiple tasks at the same time, had innovative ideas and technical expertise, could allocate funds for updating and maintaining technology and had enough knowledge of management.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that successful principals are those who can shape and improve the school environment. Leadership style of the women principals, under study, focuses on completing the task with overall planning, coordination and cooperation with the staff members. In general, the present women principals believe that they focus more on the human relation aspects rather than task aspects. It was found that women principal possesses a higher ratio in common leadership styles. It reveals their participative styles. The women principals gave importance to their staff, consider their needs, understand the importance of generating and maintaining a conducive environment.

There is need for women principals to have participative style of leadership, who could manage the human components efficiently because in this age, aggression in teachers is found common if the principal is not capable enough. Women principal would be versatile that can go with emerging trends and needs of the society. The study reveals that most of the women principals have adapted a democratic leadership style. The study also checked the perception of the teachers towards the women principals in secondary schools of Vadodara City. Most of the teachers perceived that the woman principal as visionary, lifelong learner, academician, effective communicator, strong role model, community leader, mentor and motivator, human resource manager, care taker, administrator and technocrat.

This reveals that women principal leadership styles and their qualities are capable enough as an educational leader and idolise their leader in all aspects which are stated in the present study. From the study, it was revealed that almost all the teachers were satisfied with women principals.

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