

ENSURING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS: A CASE STUDY EXAMINING HEADTEACHERS' LEADERSHIP STYLES

Fareeha Farooq*

MPhil Scholar, University of Management and Technology, Lahore.
Email: fareehakhawaja001@gmail.com

Aisha Mahmood

Assistant Professor, Department of STEM Education University of Education, Lahore
Email: Aisha.Mahmood@ue.edu.pk

Javed Iqbal

MPhil Graduate, University of Gujrat, Hafiz Hayat Campus, Gujrat.
Email: Javed.Iqbal455@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop an understanding of secondary school headteachers' practices related to their leadership styles for ensuring students' academic achievements in Kashmiri schools. Leadership styles to be studied in this research were three named Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire. This study used a qualitative research approach, and data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. The criterion sampling technique was used to select 12 secondary school headteachers from Mirpur city. The research instrument used to collect the data from research participants was a self-constructed interview guide consisting of 20 open-ended questions. Most of the headteachers held the conception that instead of a single leadership style, the use of multiple leadership styles is effective for managing teachers in order to improve students' academic achievement. Moreover, these Headteachers were keen to improve the academic achievement of the students. For this purpose, they use different leadership styles. It is also clear from the data that most Headteachers prefer a democratic leadership style to use for their staff and students. However, sometimes they rely on other leadership styles—but with the aim of improving the academic achievement of the students.

Keywords: leadership, headteachers, school, Kashmiri, academic achievement

INTRODUCTION

School leadership has remained visible in research for the last many decades because of its direct and indirect impact on the educational processes of schools and its outcomes (Heck & Hallinger, 2009), especially in student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Across the contexts, student achievement means differently, but the common one is success in achievement tests (Jensen, 2013). Although the research has clearly established the critical role of effective teachers in student achievement (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013) but same is true for school principals as he/she has to work with teachers in order to provide opportunities and resources to improve not only classroom instruction but learning of students (Doucet, 2017). The such principal being leaders of the school, not only identify ways for school improvement (Yukl, 2006) but influences others in order to improve the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Connelly (2009) and Nicholson (2013) further asserted that in the current century, the major concern of the school principal is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing all related facilities, particularly the learning environment. Although a number of studies have confirmed that the leadership styles of the principal are associated with the achievement of students (Gamage, Adams, & McCormack, 2009; Jensen, 2013; Mulford, 2003), some of the research studies concluded the contrary, and according to the leadership style of the school, the principal has minute, indirect effect on the achievement of students (Dorathy, 2013; Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

* Corresponding Author

Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of school principals about their leadership styles and how these styles are associated with the achievement of students in Kashmir.

Conceptual Framework

Laissez-faire Leadership

Leaders having this style allow their followers to make their decisions (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012). Such leaders hesitate in taking any risk, thus avoiding involvement in affairs, and followers perform as per their will (Furtner, Baldegger, & Rauthmann, 2013). Such leaders allow others to make decisions because of the belief that either others are more capable of making decisions or otherwise they will revolt if intervened by the principal (Skogstad, Hetland, Glasø, & Einarsen, 2014). This leadership style is found not to be associated with the achievement of students (Boateng, 2012), and the same was identified in a study conducted by Durham (2016), which concluded that low achievements of students in mathematics and English were attributed to the laissez-faire leadership style of the school principal. Laissez-faire leadership has no relationship with student achievement (Shortridge, 2015). Such type of leadership is perceived as inactive during important decision-making processes and thus connoted as a lack of leadership by its proponents (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Martin, 2015). Such leaders follow a hands-off approach and thus don't actively involve in school affairs (Skogstad et al., 2014). This style is negatively correlated with psychological empowerment (Owczarzak, 2019). This type of leadership style is most suitable in an environment where innovation and creativity are expected from professionals (Kars & Inandi, 2018).

Autocratic Leadership

Kurt Lewin and his associates are usually attributed to the classification of behaviors categorized as autocratic and democratic. An autocratic leader controls from the top and makes all decisions him/herself without consulting anyone else in the organization, whereas a democratic leader consults others in order to make decisions (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). Later on, Theory X is associated with autocratic leadership (Hattangadi, 2015). The research on the effectiveness of autocratic leaders comes up with mixed conclusions. According to Van Vugt and Ahuja (2010), such leaders are more successful in a setting where tasks are highly structured and mechanical instead of loosely coupled and creative. Bass and Stogdill (1990) identified such leadership as one who expects compliance with the orders from subordinates. People do work productively in the presence of such leaders and, contrary to this, in their absence (Lewin, 1948). This leadership style is found in organizations where immediate positive results are expected without altering the status quo (Marques, 2006).

Karadağ, Bektaş, Çoğaltay, and Yalçın (2015) concluded that the autocratic leadership style is associated with low morale among teachers and thus negatively associated with the achievements of students. Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) have identified that autocratic leadership associated with strict supervision of teachers' work without giving them voices in the choice of teaching strategies negatively impacts the learning of students. Workers' efficiency increases because of the reward or punishment associated with this type of leadership (Bennis, 2013). This type of leadership impedes creativity and innovation among staff as they are supposed to follow the line of action proposed by the leader (Okumbe, 1998). Most of the time, teachers used to do work as assigned by the principal, thus having no impact on decisions impacting their performance in the classroom (Yambo & Tuitoek, 2015). It was identified in research that the performance of the students was poor in Chemistry when working under the leadership of autocratic principals as compared to democratic ones (Achimugu & Obaka, 2019). Autocratic leadership was identified as causing 43.8% variation in academic performance of students as compared to democratic and Laissez-faire leadership (Oyugi & Gogo, 2019).

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership seems more promising in ensuring the success of all constituencies in school and thus remained the focus of researchers for a long. This type of leadership style enhances trust among teachers, triggers their commitment, empowers them, and thus improves achievements (Antonio, 2008). Democratic leadership has the capacity to improve education by protecting it from the harmful effects of high-stakes examinations and reforms initiated in the name of accountability (Abowitz, 2019). This type of leadership is also known as the participative leadership style (Rothwell, 2012). Democratic leadership style is critical in exploiting the expertise of individuals for the success of the school and its constituencies. The individuals working with democratic leadership assume that they all belong to the

organization, and its success is not the sole responsibility of the school principal (O' Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000). A democratic leader establishes a learning community where shared decision making and collaboration are norms, thus positively impacting the achievement of students (Prinsloo, 2003).

This type of leadership creates a balance between task and consideration, thus nurturing both teacher and students (Weller & Weller, 2002). Democratic leadership style is associated with the satisfaction of teachers with their job. A satisfied teacher better ensures the achievement of his/her students (Edgerson, Kritsonis, & Herrington, 2006).

Aims, objectives, and research questions

This research study was guided by the research question: What are the conceptions of secondary school Headteachers pertaining to the relationship between Head teacher's leadership style and students' academic achievement? Following are the research objectives researcher settled down before conducting the research.

1. To examine the conceptions of Headteachers related to the relationship between Head teachers' Autocratic leadership style and students' academic achievements at the secondary level
2. To examine the conceptions of Headteachers related to the relationship between Head teachers' Democratic leadership style and students' academic achievements at the secondary level
3. To examine the conceptions of Headteachers related to the relationship between Head teachers' Laissez-faire leadership style and students' academic achievements at the secondary level

METHODS

This study used an interview study design for sampling, gathering, and analyzing data collected from the research participants. This study adopted an empirical approach that aims to identify various conceptions of the phenomenon of leadership from the participant's expressed views. The purpose of conducting interviews was not to test the designed hypothesis or make a general evaluation about the chosen topic but to gather conceptions of Headteachers about their experiences of leadership styles and their effects on the academic achievements of students studying in their institutions.

Good perspectives are those which involve the experience a person has gained while working in the field. It gives the whole story of the experiences a person had during the job. So, questions included in the interview guide maybe are required to be molded according to the situation of the participants. Therefore, a semi-structured interview guide was prepared by the researcher because it fulfilled the basic demand of research, i.e., gathering data from research participants, which provides the knowledge required by the researcher to get genuine information about the topic. In order to prepare an interview guide, several sources were considered for help. Sources like literature reviews and old interview guides are prepared by other researches, books, and researchers. Information gathered from these sources was edited and modified according to the need of the research topic. Also, many new questions were added to the interview guide, which provided the key push to the topic chosen by the researcher. This interview guide was delivered to participants before the conduction of the interview so that they know the main idea of the research and are prepared to give answers based on the experience they had in the field according to research questions.

Before the conduction of interviews, research sites were contacted, and permission was taken for the conduction of interviews from the administrative authority. After mutual discussion date, time, and place for the conduction of interviews were also decided. Permission to record interviews was also taken beforehand from the participants of the research. All this was done to provide research participants required ease for the conduction of interviews, which certainly built their confidence, courage, and comfort towards the researcher. It was decided beforehand that participants should have experience of at least five or more years as experience played a key role for the participants in answering the questions according to the will of the researcher and the nature of the research data.

Questions were designed according to these leadership styles. Three leadership styles were studied during this research. Name of these leadership styles is Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire.

A total of eight questions were numbered under "Autocratic leadership style." Six more questions were added under "Democratic leadership style." "Laissez-faire leadership style" also included six questions under it. A total of 20 questions were included in the interview guide.

Selected institutes were called one day before the conduct of the interview again. Taking the confirmation again from the administrative authority of those institutes, the researcher visited the selected institutes the next day at a given time. After reaching the institution, the researcher met the administrative authority of that institute and introduced himself. He also showed them a departmental permission letter signed and stamped by the HOD. The researcher also showed them his university card for further clarification. A calm and comfortable place was required for the conduction of the interview, which was provided to the researcher at his request. After that, he met his research participants, and the process of conducting interviews started.

Urdu, as it is the national language of Pakistan and can be understandable by each Pakistani, was used as the primary language for conducting the interview. It was assumed beforehand that both interviewer and interviewee have a strong grip on the Urdu language and could carry on this process better in the Urdu language. However, the primary language for the writing research was English; therefore researcher had to transcribe the data from Urdu to English. Different responses were collected from all the research participants. Coding was developed according to these differences. Responses of the participants were then placed under the coding they were specific for. The main purpose of the researcher was to derive knowledge from the research participants who fulfilled the purpose of his research. Sometimes, responses were not according to the will of the researcher. Therefore, in those places researcher had to use probing questions.

Research sites

One of the major parts of this research was a selection of research sites. Selection of Headteachers from the secondary schools with respect to their experience was an important feature of this research. Keeping this factor in mind, twelve secondary schools were selected as research sites for this research. Six of these were public schools, and the other six were private for the equal participation of public and private sectors. Further, keeping in mind equal participation in public schools for males and females, three male schools were selected, and three female schools were selected. However, private included both male and female participation, so it wasn't given any priority to select three male and three female schools in the private section. Two major factors were kept in mind before the selection of schools according to the research content and required data. Those factors are: Theoretical factors and Practical factors

The theoretical factor keeps in focus that research data which is to be collected from the research participants is according to the nature, type, and particularity of research. This factor was kept in mind and was given importance because research data is the main factor that is responsible for giving appropriate and useful information about the research topic. Participants' experiences were also included in it as the more the experience is better the response is. Research participants included in this research had the experience of at least five years and were well-qualified in their field of study. Therefore, they were supposed to provide better and genuine responses according to the nature of the research.

The practical factor keeps focusing on if the research site is easily approachable or not. This factor was also kept in mind because it provided ease to both researcher and participant of the study. The researcher belonged to District Bhimber, so he selected the Headteachers of those public and private secondary schools which were located in District Bhimber and easily approachable. The environment of those schools was also comfortable, and data were easily understandable due to less noise pollution. Management of time was also easy, and there was no traveling issue for the researcher.

The researcher kept both points explained above before selecting of location from where the research data was to be collected. Six public secondary schools were selected from District Bhimber. Three of these schools were from the male section, and the other three were from the female section. Male and female equity for education was also kept in mind while selecting these particular secondary schools. Six private secondary schools were also selected from District Bhimber. Generally, there is co-education in private secondary schools, and both male and female members of staff are responsible for their student's performance, so it wasn't given importance whether these schools are of a male section or a female section. Participants selected from these schools were fully capable and had knowledge of the research subject and agreed to give an interview to the researcher. These secondary schools were also easily approachable for the researcher, and participants fulfilled the criteria set by the researcher

beforehand. Therefore, these schools proved to be best for researchers in order to gather data from research participants.

Participants

Employees of any organization can provide their basic information as they are the victim of the process being carried on in that organization. Qualitative research aims to get an understanding and studying of selected cases. These factors were kept in mind before the selection of participants. Many techniques for the selection of participants were available to the researcher, but the purposive sampling technique was the one that fulfilled the purpose. Criterion sampling technique which is a sub-type of purposive sampling technique, was used to select participants of the study. Specific criteria were developed for the selection of participants for the study. A total of 12 participants were chosen as the target population for the study. In-depth data was collected from the participants as it was demanded of the qualitative research methodology. For the selection of the target population following criteria were kept under view: Participant had an experience of at least five years, was an easy approach, agreed to give an interview by him/herself, and had appropriate knowledge of leadership styles being studied in this research.

ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process that gains weight during the collection of data and deepens at the end of the research. Data analysis should be given importance as it is the factor that helps researchers to get better findings in order to reach an eligible, valid, and strong conclusion. Data that is in written, pictorial, or vocal form substitutes itself in the content section, and its analysis is called content analysis. As this study is a qualitative phenomenological study, so the analysis was also qualitative in nature. At first, the preparation of the interview guide was done through the help of a literature review, consulting interview guides prepared by other researchers, and the supervisor's help. After preparing the interview guide, permission was taken from the research participants through the proper channel for the conduction of interviews, and the face-to-face interview was taken. This interview was also recorded. Permission for recording interviews was also taken from the participants. After the completion of the interviews, the recorded data was transcribed, and a summary of each dimension was prepared. This summary helped much in the development of coding, which was a key source for analyzing the data.

The researcher had good knowledge of the English language, so he was the primary source for the transcription of data. However, the experts' guide was taken at each and every turn.

Thematic Findings

This section presents findings related to the self-efficacy beliefs of prospective teachers regarding classroom management in the form of interpretive profiles.

Autocratic Style and Students' Academic Achievement

Supervising teachers

All of the participants agreed to the point that they supervise their teachers. Most of the participants used different methods of supervision, which are; checking students' homework, visiting the classrooms, observing methods of teaching, and checking lesson plans. Some of the participants mentioned the conduction of tests either monthly or weekly. One participant argued that supervision should be done by using democratic leadership styles, counseling and solving problems teachers face keeping their likes and dislikes in mind and inquiring about the use of AV Aids, and checking how they help in increasing students' academic achievements.

Relationship between supervision and students' academic achievements

Most of the participants agreed and believed that there is a strong relationship present between the supervision of teachers and students' academic achievements. If supervision is good, then students' academic achievements also become good. On the other hand, if supervision is not good, then students' academic achievement also decreases. One of the participants argued that the supervision of teachers raises the discipline of students. Another participant stated that discipline prepares students for the need to obey.

Conception of teachers

Most of the participants agreed with the point that teachers are not lazy in the general population. Instead, they have deep thinking on every aspect of life, knowledge about related subjects, are well-qualified, take an interest in their work and remain honest. Plan the lessons and use available AV Aids

to make students' achievement levels high. One of the participants raised a point that laziness is much increased by the upgradation of the curriculum because those teachers who have low qualifications and lack of knowledge may become the cause of laziness.

Rewarding teachers to increase students' academic achievements

Most of the Interview participants stated that students' academic achievements are improved when Headteachers manage rewards for good students and best teachers. In morning assembly and staff meetings, praise the good students and teachers. One of the participants argued that there must be a particularly good amount of money as a reward for the best teacher.

Punishing teachers to motivate them to achieve organizational objectives

According to most of the participants, punishment is not a good aspect of betterment. Punishment has bad effects on the self-respect of the teachers. Punishment creates uncertain conditions between teachers and Headteachers. Non-cooperation increases, and cooperation decreases due to punishment. The environment of schools is damaged, and mutual misunderstanding creates between Headteachers and teachers. Some participants argued that in this position, constructive and creative thinking doesn't nurture. One of the participants said that disappointment position might develop among teachers and Headteachers, which affects the student's learning. According to one of the participants, teachers should regularly guide and strictly control but not punish. One participant argued that a little punishment should be given for improvement in the behavior of teachers.

Directing teachers when they feel insecure about their work

All of the participants agreed to the point that they give directions to their teachers whenever their teachers feel insecure about their work. Most of the participants explained that they discuss, cooperate and coordinate problems of teachers they face because of their work. Some of the participants argued that if the teacher consults about any problem, then help is provided to him to make his work easy, and motivation is given to him to find the reason behind the insecurity. One of the participants included counseling as a technique to reduce the insecurity factor among teachers.

Headteacher is the chief judge of the achievements of members of the group to increase the student's academic achievements

Most of the participants stated that the Headteacher is the Head of the institution and understands the ups and downs of teachers, students, school-related members, and the institution itself. Therefore, he should be a chief judge of achievements. Some of the participants argued that the Headteacher has the role of facilitator but does not judge in this scenario because he guides his teachers to show good performance in order to increase students' academic achievements. One of the participants disagreed to the point that Headteacher is the chief judge. According to him, it is the work of judgment to be always fair, and a judge always searches for bad, negative, and defective points of others. This factor certainly affects teachers' self-respect.

Ways to give orders and clarify procedures to teachers

Most of the participants used teachers' meetings to pass out orders for counseling. In counseling meetings, they discuss the previous orders which were given earlier and also pass new orders for further work. Some of the participants mentioned providing guidance in order to clarify orders. Few research participants explained that they give orders to teachers in verbal or written form in the order book. According to them, verbal orders are timely and are given according to the deficiencies of teachers during class visits or office meetings. Written orders are specific and are for long periods of time.

Democratic Style and Students' Academic Achievement

Making teachers a part of the decision-making process

Every research participant stated that in the process of decision-making, the involvement of teachers is necessary because they know the students' psychology, strategies of mental growth, and individual differences due to close relations with students. Therefore, the teacher feels his own share in opinion, commitment, teacher's willingness, and keen interest to complete every work happily in the system. Therefore, teachers can give good opinions and suggestions for the improvement of student achievements. Few research participants mentioned counseling to be a necessary part for teachers in the decision-making process as, according to them, counseling is very important in democratic thinking and helps much in increasing students' academic achievements.

Guiding teachers to improve students' academic achievements

Every research participant stated that teachers should be provided guidance to improve students' academic achievements. For good suggestions and special tips, they replied that teachers should plan their lessons according to modern techniques and methods of teaching. AV Aids should be used, and students should be taught in such a way that their concepts get clear. Students should be involved in curricular and co-curricular activities keeping individual differences in mind. Teachers should be punctual, make the attendance of students better in class, prepare their diary regularly, work according to the timetable and examine students through tests. One of the research participants stated that Headteachers should guide teachers by giving suggestions to increase students' academic achievements. Suggestions are to improve the student's daily attendance in the classroom, check and appraise daily work, manage weekly or monthly tests, and prepare reports of these tests.

Providing supportive communication

Most of the research participants stated that most teachers need frequent and supportive communication with Headteachers for help in related matters of teaching and to compensate for teachers' problems through counseling and discussion. According to some participants, supportive material which may be provided is; helping books, teacher guides, the facility of laboratories, the provision of libraries, study tours, and organizing training for teaching English, Mathematics, and other subjects. A few research participants stated that teachers feel shy and a feeling that their self-respect will decrease, and they don't share their problems with Headteachers. Therefore, it is the Duty of Headteachers to involve those teachers in discussion and to help them through guidance.

Helping teachers in accepting responsibilities for teaching

Most of the research participants stated that they provide facilities to teachers in the teaching-learning process by using available resources like financial and material aids. According to one of the research participants, Headteacher discusses the planning of teachers about their work and identifies defects in planning. It is the way for help and motivation and also gives thrust to teachers to identify and accept their responsibilities.

Helping teachers find their passion

Most of the research participants stated that Headteachers motivate teachers intrinsically and extrinsically to make the performance of teachers and students better and to encourage them. If Headteacher doesn't motivate teachers to increase students' achievements, then the results will not be positive. Some research participants argued that some teachers use traditional teaching methods, AV Aids, and activity-based learning methods. Therefore, it is easy to provide passion to those teachers by giving examples of education development and by telling the level of education in foreign countries. According to one of the research participants, it is not the Head teacher's job to help teachers find their passion, but it is also the Head teacher's duty to guide teachers to become better at teaching.

Seeing Teachers as competent individuals in doing their work

Most of the research participants gave a positive response to that question and argued that teachers are competent in doing their work. According to them, Headteachers should motivate them by making those teachers Head of different in-school committees. In this way, Headteacher would also be able to check the leadership abilities of teachers and train/guide them according to those abilities. Few participants stated that competent teachers are assets of schools and society and work much in making the community better. One of the participants argued that, basically, teachers are not competent. Their competency develops and increases with the passage of time, according to their situation and experience. They also need frequent guidance, support, and suitable supervision in order to become better.

Laissez-faire Style

Letting teachers work out problems on their own

All research participants disagreed with this point and argued that Headteachers should not let teachers be on their own in complex situations. Instead, Headteachers should help and guide teachers to solve problems related to the teaching and learning process in order to make students' academic achievements better. Some participants stated that if teachers become confused due to complex situations, then they cannot do influential work and thus can't succeed in getting better results. This also reduces their ability to increase students' academic achievements. According to one of the participants, problems are the main cause of creating confusion which raises disappointment in teachers, and this is harmful to the whole education system in which those teachers are working.

Staying out of the way of teachers as they do their work

Most of the participants disagreed with the statement of the question and argued that it is not beneficial and better to stay out of teachers' work. Instead, the Headteacher should interfere in teachers' work and should also guide them accordingly. They also mentioned the guidance and counseling process and declared that guidance and counseling help to increase students' academic achievements. Some participants stated that interference without any reason is not suitable if teachers are doing their work accurately. According to one of the participants, Headteachers should help and guide teachers on their requests and only at times of need. Another participant stated that supervision is necessary for guiding teachers in order to make them aware of their incomplete or diverged work during teaching.

Allowing teachers to appraise their own work

Most of the research participants did not agree with the point that traditional methods of appraising are not enough for the evaluation of students' achievements and teachers' performance. Also, every teacher is not aware of all the methods and types of evaluation. Therefore, it is not possible for them to evaluate the results exactly and interpretation of the results is also not a part of their teaching-learning process. One of the research participants exclaimed that teachers might appraise their own work, but it is difficult to mention defects in their own work during evaluation. Therefore, the purpose of the evaluation is disturbed. According to one other participant, Headteachers should allow teachers to appraise their own work. Sometimes, Headteachers find good and bad points of teachers according to that and guide teachers accordingly to be better in the teaching-learning process.

Giving teachers complete freedom to solve problems on their own

Most of the research participants disagreed with the point that teachers cannot sort out relevant teaching problems. Therefore, they need the Head teacher's help. Some of the participants stated that they get involved in work problems to find a solution. They also consult teachers about the problems teachers face to increase students' academic achievements. Few of the research participants argued that if teachers are responsible, are experts in methods of teaching, use different teaching strategies and have the ability to solve problems, then Headteachers should give these teachers freedom to solve their problems on their own. One of the research participants explained that guidance is necessary for teachers in order to make them good in the teaching-learning process.

Perception of teachers' preference for input from the Headteacher

Most of the participants argued that teachers are competent, experienced, regular, confident, dutiful, and honest in their work. Therefore, they feel little input from the Headteacher is enough to increase the student's academic achievements. Some participants believed that due to mutual counseling and interference, students' academic achievements could be increased. One of the participants advocated that his teachers discuss all the problems with him and also with other teachers in order to reach a proper solution. According to him, it meant that teachers expected maximum input and consultation by Headteachers in order to increase students' academic achievements.

Leaving teachers alone to work

All the participants stated that the majority of teachers are not aware of modern teaching methods and techniques and the upgradation of the curriculum. Thus, this holds the responsibility for weaknesses in teaching. Due to this, a non-interesting situation is created in the teaching-learning process. This situation is also responsible for a decrease in students' academic achievements. Few participants explained that mostly all the needy teachers are not involved in teachers' training courses, workshops, and seminars, and they have less knowledge about how to evaluate their teaching. Therefore, it is not best to leave teachers alone.

CONCLUSION

This study provides knowledge about leadership styles used by Headteachers to make students' academic performance better. Data collected through the participants is qualitative in nature, and it includes three leadership styles; Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire leadership styles. Several questions are enlisted under these three leadership styles. The main focus of the researcher was to gain an insight into what leadership styles Headteachers prefer to use in order to make their students better in their learning.

Perspectives of Headteachers show clearly that they are keen to improve the academic achievement of the students. For this purpose, they use different leadership styles. It is also clear from

the data gained that most of the Headteachers prefer a democratic leadership style to use for their staff and students. However, sometimes they rely on other leadership styles—but with the aim of improving the academic achievement of the students.

Implications of the research

This is a qualitative study, and any findings of any qualitative study come with certain limitations. There are definite principles mentioned in qualitative research, and the implications of this study are according to those. The sample of this study was selected through a purposeful sampling technique, and the sampling size was very small. Therefore, it is advocated that the implications of this thesis would be on the same type of population, same school system and structure, and same leadership styles under which this study was conducted.

Suggestions related to the practice

This is a study about Head teachers' conceptions of the relationship of secondary school Head teachers' leadership styles with students' academic achievements. Certain suggestions are given below, which would be helpful for secondary school Headteachers in specific and other administration parties, in general, to make their institution's results better by enhancing their students' academic achievements.

It is evident from the findings of the study that most of the participants are using a democratic leadership style to improve the academic achievement of the students at the secondary level. They, sometimes, also rely on another style—with the sole aim of enhancing students' achievement. Knowledge of how various leadership styles effects students' achievement should be incorporated into Headteacher training workshops so that future Headteachers are better equipped.

Supervision methods are necessary to supervise the teachers as there is a strong relationship between the administration's supervision of teachers and students' academic achievements. Therefore, certain supervision methods should be implemented by Headteachers according to the nature of both; teachers and problems in order to make their students able to acquire academic achievements.

Data revealed that most teachers are not lazy because they have deep thinking abilities, are well qualified, and take an interest in their work. This implements that Headteachers must work according to the lost points but not damage the self-respect of the teachers. Appraisal and rewards should also be given to good teachers in order to give them more motivation to work for the betterment of their students. There should also be no punishment for teachers because punishment has a bad effect on the self-respect of teachers and creates negative reaction conditions.

Headteachers should give directions to their teachers whenever they feel insecure about their teachers' work. The Headteacher is the leader of an institution and understands the ups and downs of teachers, students, school-related members, and institutions, so he should be a chief judge. Headteachers should also give orders and clarify procedures by holding teachers' meetings for counseling.

Headteachers should involve teachers in the decision-making process. It will encourage teachers to work more to increase their students' academic achievements. Headteachers should also provide guidance to teachers to improve students' academic achievements. Headteachers should support teachers in planning their lessons using AV Aids and conceptual teaching skills by keeping in mind individual differences of their students, writing teacher's diary, and keeping records of tests whether daily, weekly or monthly. There should be frequent sessions of discussion and counseling for teachers, and supporting material should also be provided to teachers for teaching purposes.

It is suggested that available material and financial aid should also be given to teachers in order to motivate them intrinsically and extrinsically to make their performance of teachers better. It is certain that if teachers become better, then the level of students' academic achievement would also increase. Motivation should also be given to teachers by making teachers Head of different school committees. In this way, Headteachers may also check the leadership abilities of their teachers and work according to these abilities.

It is strongly advocated that Headteachers should not leave their teachers on their own in complex situations. Instead, they should help and guide their teachers to solve problems. It is not beneficial to stay out of teachers' work. Check, and balance is required in order to check their teaching abilities and skills and to make them better in the teaching-learning process. It is not best to leave teachers alone. Sometimes, teachers are not aware of modern teaching techniques/methods and up gradation of the curriculum. Thus, this holds the responsibility of weakness in teaching. Headteachers should arrange frequent training workshops in order to reduce these issues to a minimum level.

Suggestions related to Future Research

Most Headteachers prefer a democratic leadership style to use for their staff and students in order to improve the academic achievement of students at the secondary level. Future research studies can be done by changing the education level, i.e., elementary or higher secondary in place of secondary. This study is conducted in one ethnically homogenous sample selected from the Kashmir area. The finding may have been influenced by the selected sample. Future studies may use another sample from geographical areas to check the validity of the findings reported through this research. This study used self-reported data only. It is suggested that future research studies may involve teachers and students as participants to illuminate the phenomenon further.

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