

Practices of 21st Century Skills by School Leaders in Rawalpindi City

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Abstract

21st century is different than 20th in citizenship and abilities, thus requires a different set of skills expected differently in each field (Dede, 2009). This study intended to explore the practices of school leaders of Rawalpindi city secondary schools about 21st century 4 Cs leadership skills; Competence, Character, Compassion & Courage. This was an exploratory research. Survey method quantitative research approach was used. An adapted questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data. All the school leaders of Rawalpindi city were the population of the study. Through simple random sampling 98 school leaders were selected to answer questionnaire. The finding of the study indicates that 4Cs leadership skills are practiced by School leaders in their school. School leaders use motivation (mean= 4.251), accountability (mean= 4.13), problem solving (mean= 4.12), and social leadership (mean= 4.13) skills most than other sub-skills in their practices. School leaders found themselves more social and accountable towards society. This study is significant for school leaders as they will find out the importance of 21st century leadership skills in their leadership positions. The finding of the study recommends that there should be training and workshop for school leaders about 21st century leadership skills.

Keywords: School Leaders, 21st Century Leadership Skills, and Practices

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Introduction

21st century is different than 20th in citizenship and abilities, thus requires a different set of skills expected differently in each field (Dede, 2009). Now it is more inter-connected and demands more new skills (Suto, 2013). Now, in this era responsibilities and duties have been changed for school leaders. Now school is more accountable for performance of their students. Leaders play an important role in development of an organization.

Leadership is challenged with different changes in 21st century. Now we need school leader who are determined, possess new skills and ideas and ready to take risk. Leaders need to be more active and responsible in order to confront challenges of 21st century. Leaders play an important role in development of an organization. Their roles determine if organization will succeed or fail. Shoho (2006) asserts that one of the major or sometime the only factor that determine whether an educational organization, be it a school or college or a university will fail or succeed is a leadership.

This paper consists of rational of study, literature review and methodology of study is presented. Quantitative research design was used in order to answer the research question. Quantitative data were presented in tables to show the mean score, standard deviation.

Rational of the Study

21st century skills are required for school principals to practice in their leadership position. There are some training programs for school leaders offered by PEF (Punjab Education Foundation). However, Researchers have not found training that is specially planned for school leaders or trained them to confront 21st century challenges. Also, that is observed while doing teaching practicum that school leaders manage their school in traditional way. To run school and to keep it up to date school leaders required skills that will help them to manage effectively. 21st century skills are needed for facing issues and for strategic planning (John, 2015). So, it is significant to study the need of school leaders and explore practice of needed 21st century leadership skills. Therefore, this study intended to explore practice of school leaders about 21st century leadership skills.

Research Questions

Major research question is:

1. What 21st century 4 Cs skills—*Competence, Character, Compassion, and Courage*—do the school leaders practice in their leadership positions [schools, community etc.]?

- a. What is the understanding of school leaders about the recommended 4C 21st century leadership skills?

Review of Literature

21st Century School Leadership

Northouse (2012) define leadership as the ability of the person to influence others. If a person has such leadership abilities, then he is able to lead others. Leadership qualities can also be supposed as an attribute that some person possess. If leadership qualities are considered as an attribute, then each leader has certain qualities that in return affect his leadership style which means how leaders leads others. Different leaders have different qualities for instance, some have the quality of confidence, while other leaders have the decisive quality and some leader might be outward and sociable (Northouse, 2012).

Due to demand of the 21st century and current rearrangement initiatives, leadership views are changing constantly (Haider, 2008). Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) described that today the success of leaders depends upon being able to; (i) communicate with each other (ii) share the information; (iii) use the complex information in order to solve the critical problems; and, (iv) make adjustment in school with respect to demand of changing external environment and develop new knowledge through directing and expanding the technological advancement.

21st Century School Leadership Skills

There is a demand that school leaders have to be well established and being able to fulfill the challenges and demand of 21st century because of changes in the environment with respect to economic change, political change and social change in which their school are situated and in addition due to critical changes in schooling system (Northouse, 2012). As a result, this change brings the changes in public education that is needed from the school leaders. Research has shown that school leaders have not only act as a manager that manages others or assigning task to others that are followed by rules and regulations or avoid the mistakes of others but they also have to be a leader that encourages learning meaning thereby he should have to be a learning leader who is able to make teams and be able to deliver an effective instruction (Syed, 2015). The 21st century brings a lot of challenges for people like higher authorities, students, leaders, entrepreneurs, managers etc., same as it brought complexities in the job of school leaders (Suto, 2013). As proactive leadership is encouraged in the literature, but the school leader is not in a position to act as a proactive

leader because they are increasingly depending on the environment day by day. Therefore, for those school leaders who want to make their school different and who want to get rid of this dependency, they need a latest approach and strategies to accomplish their tasks and goals (Fullan, 1998).

Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) has shown that skills of 21st century focus on how school leaders work effectively and efficiently with all the people who come from different background. School leaders must have courage to accept and appreciate the ideas of others, able to set the goals and then do effort to accomplish these goals, handle the task efficiently and effectively, show courageously themselves answerable for outcomes, follow and promote norms, values and ethical code of conduct, and consider themselves responsible and accountable (Talat & Fakhra 2014).

School leaders who practice 21st century leadership skills have ability to make positive relationship with others. By using different skills, they can improve their school environment and can built positive environment (Piaw, Hee, Ismail & Ying, 2013). According to some scholars, school leaders with good leadership skills encourage positive climate, relationship between school and broader communities, include high quality school climate; learning and teaching; accountability; student and teacher attitudes; non-academic and academic performance (Glantz, 2008; Hallinger, 2004).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Rizzo (2012), who is director of Johnson leadership program, develop a 4 Cs leadership model. This model was developed to train leaders so they can confront different situation with new skills. This model is consisting of four major skills named as Competence, Character, Compassion, and Character.

LEAAD (2014), also develop a 4 Cs framework for leaders to develop ethical leadership. It involves four major skills and each of the skill also consist sub-skills.

These two models; 4 Cs leadership model by Rizzo (2012) and LEAAD 4 Cs framework by LEAAD (2014) further leads towards making conceptual framework for this study.

1. Competence

'What you know' Competence is one of the "4 Cs" and known as foundation of leadership. Competence is the know-how or the ability to handle situation efficiently. Without trusting one's judgment, face difficult situation and without developing skills a good leader cannot become competent. This is an important skill for Pakistani school leaders to practice in their leadership position. Competence involves

four sub skills; Problem solving, Interest Orientation, Critical Thinking, and Decision making

2. Character

“Who you are” Leader with character must have integrity. Being a strong leader means understanding yourself and your passion. Their actions and words are consistent, and values are clear to individuals they lead. In Pakistan school system a school leader having strong integrity have positive impact. Character has more four sub-skills, which are self-management, accountability, learning orientation and fairness (LEAAD, 2014).

3. Compassion

“Whom you bring on board” It implies generosity. A leader with compassion show concerns for each and every person they lead. A leader should tell from communicating and interaction with individual that they are important. To run school successfully this is important skill to possess. Other sub skills like communication, relationship, social-culture awareness and social leadership are part of compassion.

4. Courage

“How far you are willing to take your vision” One of the 4 Cs of leadership model is Courage. It must be developed through conscious effort practice and personal commitment over time. It is like to force ourselves to speak up whenever anything unethical happened. Self-belief, taking challenge, vision and goals, and motivation all these skills comes under courage (LEAAD, 2014).

Researchers believe this framework is important for current study. As this study move around the 21st century leadership skills so this will better guide this study. This 4 Cs leadership framework lead the research question and survey questionnaire.

Research Methodology

This is an exploratory study followed by Survey Method Quantitative research design. It is believed that this is an appropriate design to answer research questions.

Population of the Study

All Headmasters/Mistresses/Principals/ In-charge of government secondary schools in Rawalpindi city were selected as population of the study. There are total 161 secondary school leaders are in Rawalpindi city.

Sample and Sampling Design

For selection of sample for this study simple random sampling technique was used. 98 school leaders were selected randomly to collect quantitative data.

Instrument of Data Collection

Two different standardized questionnaires were adapted and combined together to design questionnaire. One was ‘21st century school administrator skills survey’ by NASSP professional development service and ‘Leadership Skill Questionnaire’ by Northouse (2012). Before using this questionnaire, researchers sought permission from authors. The study conceptual framework helps in adaptation of this questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Content Validity

I sought the help of experts from Test Resource Center at Fatima Jinnah Women University as well as the faculty of Education in order to adapt and contextualize the content of developed/adapted questionnaire.

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was conducted for calculating reliability of the scale. Fifty school leaders were selected other than the sample for pilot testing from Government secondary schools of Rawalpindi District.

Reliability

It was important to calculate the alpha reliability of standardized Questionnaire in order to find out the suitability of questionnaire in the Pakistani context. Internal consistency reliability of scale was .952 calculated by SPSS 20.0, presented in following table.

Table 3.4:

Reliability of Survey Questionnaire

N	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficient
50	55	0.952

Results

Among the 98 survey respondents the participants were predominantly female. 56% out of 98 participants of the survey questionnaire were female. Interestingly, the participants fall in all of the three categories of age ranging from 25 to above 60, which gave an idea that the selected sample varied in ages hence they have provided me age-diverse perspectives. The year of leadership experience was vast and the difference among participants stretched over less than five years of experience to over 25 years of experience. This was another influential indicator exhibiting the multi-tiered opinion from novice to expert leaders. Moreover, the highest level of education was wide-ranging from a bachelor's degree to a doctoral degree, which gives me different perspectives from their educational backgrounds.

Below tables shows the response of 98 participants about 4Cs leadership skills and their sub skills.

Competence

The below table display the results of sub-skills of competence. Mean shows the use of each sub skills by school leaders in their leadership position.

Table 1:
Competence

Leadership Skill	Sub-Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Competence	Problem Solving	98	4.12	.56332
	Decision Making	98	4.058	.59832
	Interest Orientation	98	4.051	.61548
	Critical Thinking	94	4.01	.65483

Above table shows mean and SD of responses of participants about the items of sub skills asked in questionnaire. Table 1 shows the dissimilarities among the use of sub skills. Most of the school leaders practice problem solving skills more than other skills. Problem solving mean score is 4.12 that is highest against other sub skills. With the mean 4.01 critical thinking is the sub skills which is used lowest among others. In this theme data shows that in general school leaders' practice and have understanding about the sub skills of competence. Overall data show that problem solving is the skill that school leaders mostly use in their leadership position.

Character

The below table Shows the results of four sub-skills of Character.

Table 2:
Character

Leadership Skill	Sub-Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Character	Accountability	98	4.13	.58393
	Self-Management	98	4.081	.67869
	Learning Orientation	96	4.068	.74914
	Fairness	98	4.061	.70726

Above table 2 depict the mean and SD of cumulated responses of participants about the items of sub skills asked in questionnaire. The data in table 2 shows the differences among the use of sub skills. Most of the school leaders practice accountability skills more than other skills. Accountability mean score is 4.13 that is highest against other sub skills. With the mean 4.06 fairness is the sub skills which is used least among others. In this theme data shows that in general school leaders' practice the sub skills of character. Overall data show that accountability is the skill that school leaders mostly use in their leadership position.

Compassion

The below table display the results of sub-skills of compassion. Mean shows the use of each sub skills by school leaders in their leadership position.

Table 3:
Compassion

Leadership Skill	Sub-Skills	N	Mean	SD
Compassion	Social Leadership	98	4.137	.61565
	Relationship	98	4.10	.53113
	Socio-Cultural Awareness	98	4.05	.61529
	Communication	98	4.0	.58217

Above table depict the calculated mean and SD of responses of the participants against each of the sub skills. Results shows that school leaders are practicing all mentioned above sub skills in different situations. More specifically, most of the school leaders use social leadership with

the mean 4.13 more than other skills. And with mean 4.03 communication is used least against other sub skills.

Courage

Following table shows the all four sub skills collective result.

Table 4:
Courage

Leadership Skill	Sub-Skills	N	Mean	SD
Courage	Motivation	98	4.251	.63869
	Vision and Goals	98	4.163	.72785
	Self-Belief	98	4.102	.63572
	Taking Challenges	98	3.942	.74154

Above table 2 depict the mean and SD of cumulated responses of participants about the items of sub skills asked in questionnaire. The data in table 4 shows the differences among the use of sub skills. Most of the school leaders practice motivation skills more than other skills. Taking challenges mean score is 4.2 that is highest against other sub skills. With the mean 3.9 taking challenges is the sub skills which is used least among others. In this theme data shows that overall school leaders' practice the sub skills of courage.

Discussion

This study proposed to explore the practices of 21st century leadership skills by school leaders, which include principals, in-charge, head mistresses, and headmasters of schools. This contains discussion of results that comes from analysis of data. I further support the finding of the study with theoretical and empirical view of previous research.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study depicts that school leaders are practicing these 21st century leadership skills in their schools. The study data depict that school leaders' practice and understand their competencies. The study results show that 21st century skill competence and its sub skills are more practice and understand by school leaders more than other major skills. School leaders find themselves more competent as a leader. In different

situation school leaders practice sub skills of competence in schools. It is showed that problem solving skills is mostly used of other sub skills.

They shared their experience and use different ways to solve problems. However, critical thinking is least practiced and understood by school leaders. The finding shows that school leaders considered themselves as problem solvers rather than critical thinkers. They did not consider critical thinking as a part of leadership skills.

According to Haider (2008), effective school leaders know how to solve the problem according to situation and took their whole school as unit. Research suggested that it is not only the duty of school leader to just solve the problem but also find all other solution that will be best in occurred situation and school leaders must be good in finding the best solution for complex setting by measuring the complexities and challenges (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, Marks, and Palmon 2000). Therefore, given literature in view of leadership skills, results are supported by previous researchers (Haider, 2008; Mumford, Marks, Zaccaro & Palmon, 2000).

With the respect of second skill, the results show (refers to table 2) that Character is practicing by school leaders. They understand and also practice sub-skills. Accountability is the sub-skill that is practiced most, and learning orientation is the least practiced out of other sub skill. According to Shoho (2006), character of the leaders should be the way that they are strong, and they can manage their own needs. Same viewpoint of Hargreaves, Halasz and Pont (2007) describe that school leaders are accountable of taking decision in their school, and they take responsibility for purifying the education system. Therefore, the study result is supported by view of previous researcher (Shoho, 2006; Hargreaves, Halasz & Pont, 2007).

The current study that the major skill compassion is also using by school leaders in their leadership position. Quantitative results show that sub skill social leadership is the skill that is more practice by school leaders among other sub skills. Finding depict that school leaders appropriately interact with others who are from different backgrounds. As the view of Fullan (1998), not only being collaborative in nature is important but school leaders also should have confidence to make collaborations with other schools.

According to Alvy and Robbins (2005), stated in their research that to be efficient, school leaders must have cultural leadership qualities. Given literature in view of leadership skills, results are supported by previous researchers (Fullan, 1998; Alvy & Robbins, 2005).

With respect of last skill 'Courage' that is needed for 21st century leadership. The results of study underlined that school leaders are practicing sub skills of *Courage*. They considered themselves as courageous. However, the use of these skills is different. The results depict that school leader use motivation skills more than other sub-skills. According to Dimmock & Walker (2002); Silva (2009), school leader can be summarized as a motivator, and they should use motivation to manage the school. Northouse (2012) stated that not only school leaders who should develop new concepts and ideas, but they should motivate innovations from their team members. Hence, the previous researcher (Dimmock & Walker, 2002; Silva, 2009; Northouse, 2012) supports the results of this study.

Conclusions

Current research study intended to explore the practices of recommended 21st century 4 Cs leadership skills by secondary school leaders. this study helps school leaders to identify the 21st century skills that are needed today. This study brought the unique perspectives of school leaders about 21st century leadership skills. The results of this study contributed to the identification of the strongest leadership skills the school leaders possess.

This study concluded that the school leaders possess positive attitude towards the practice of 21st century skills. They believed that 21st century skills should be practiced and 21st century skills are need of today's leadership. The factors such as motivation form DEO and collaboration with teachers supported School leaders in their leadership position to use 21st century recommended 4 Cs leadership skills. More specifically, professional development workshop for school leaders to make themselves up to date with the knowledge and skills requires in the 21st century was highly recommended by school leaders. So, it is also concluded that different training workshop on 21st century skills will be significant for school leaders so they can run their school effectively.

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