


Chapter 6

Transforming School Organisational Culture Through a Contextually Relevant Change Leadership Approach Within a Pakistani Urban Private School

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the transformative journey of a K-12 Pakistani urban private school in moving from autocratic-charismatic leadership practices to distributed-strategic leadership practices through the use of a total quality management change leadership approach integrated over two years. This study found that distributed educational leadership practices are developed at the school level through contextually relevant change leadership approaches that focus on sustained and continuous school improvement. The chapter provides insights into possibilities for further developing school organisational culture through emphasis given to collaborative and strategic decision-making practices amongst senior-level, middle-level, and teacher-level leaders in urban private schools in Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

Within Pakistan, research indicates that a majority of school leaders demonstrate an autocratic, predominantly bureaucratic approach to leadership with the principal positioned as the main decision-maker within the school (Ahmad & Dilshad, 2016; Salfi et al., 2014; Simkins et al., 2003). This practice is largely prevalent in public schools (Jehan, 2015; Rizvi, 2008), where school principals follow the directives of their respective superiors and have limited freedom to utilise transformative educational change leadership approaches for school improvement. This constraint has negatively impacted student achievement outcomes (Jehan, 2015) and might be one of the main reasons for high student dropout rates in public schools across Pakistan and rising enrolments in private schools (Fernandes, 2019a).

In contrast, examples of distributed leadership approaches are found within the private sector, especially in community-based private schools (Salim, 2016; Shah, 2018). Private schools now constitute one-third of the schools within Pakistan (ISAPS, 2010). Unlike the public sector, the absence of a central regulating system offers private schools greater freedom to construct their educational philosophy independently (Raza et al., 2021) using transformative leadership approaches (Burns, 1978; van Oord, 2013). This educational philosophy reinforces the curriculum choice, pedagogical practices, and operational strategies, which make up their school's organisational culture. In fact, due to this autonomous nature of private schools (Nadeem et al., 2019), private school principals are able to use a distributive-strategic leadership approach involving others, such as teachers and school personnel, in engaging in transformative school improvement (Salfi et al., 2014) and participative decision-making models (Fernandes, 2019a).

This chapter focuses on the transformative journey of a K-12 private urban school in Pakistan, moving from an autocratic-charismatic leadership to a distributed-strategic leadership approach adopted through use of a total quality management (TQM) change leadership approach (Fernandes, 2019c). The main research question that forms the basis of this chapter is,

“How do Pakistani private schools use contextually-relevant change leadership approaches to transform their organisational culture”?

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