School Leadership

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Abstract

Leadership plays a major role in increasing schools' achievements and improving effective learning, which positively affects institutions, society and quality of life. This study aims to investigate the most effective tools and qualities for school leaders. The data was collected by investigating successful school experiences and recommendations from previous studies that revealed several qualities principals must apply to their schools' leadership practice.

Keywords—principals, schools, leadership

Introduction

The school has an important role in the community. It is the starting point for individual success and a place where the nation's future citizens and leaders are created. It is no less important than the national economy, as educated citizens grow the economy and diversify the sources of income and production.

Working to achieve educational aims is vital, but these aims must be agreed upon by the school and its community. If managers simply focus on implementing external initiatives, they risk becoming 'managerialist'. Successful management requires a clear link between aims, strategy and operational management (Bush, 2008).

The School's Achievements

The achievements and success of a school are the responsibility of the school leader and society. Both parties must commit to developing effective methods of communication between the external and internal environments of the school.

The goals of a school or college are ultimately impacted by stresses arising from the larger educational setting, leading to concerns about the feasibility of the visions of the school. Many countries, such as England and Wales, have a national curriculum, and such government prescriptions leave little space for schools to determine their own educational goals. Institutions are left to interpret external imperatives rather than determine their individual aims on the basis of their own assessment of student needs (Bush, 2008).

Figure 1. Categories of Variables Impacting Student Academic Achievement
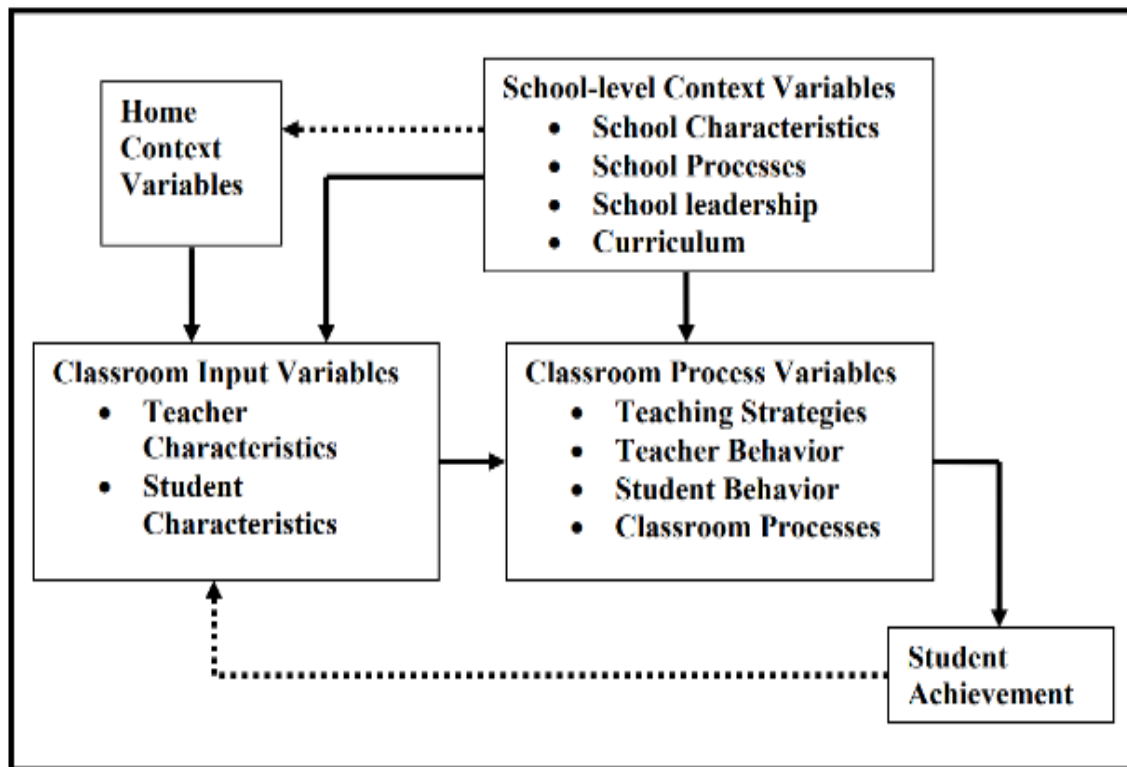
William et al., 2009

A strong culture of teamwork and teams that include teaching staff or administrative staff could make a difference to school achievements. Effective school groups have been created in some districts in which teachers, parents and sometimes students engage in discussions about school needs, goals and behaviour. These teams also grow into learning groups in which people are empowered to interact and collaborate. Methods should be implemented in school development strategies to improve working conditions for teachers and to ensure that the different stakeholders in the school community understand and value the relationship between teachers who guide continuous and efficient learning (English, 2006)

School Leadership

Globally, school leadership has become a focal point in education policy agendas. It plays a key role in enhancing a school's outcomes by shaping teachers' motivations and skills, as well as the atmosphere and environment of the schools. To increase the effectiveness and equity of education, effective school leadership is necessary (Pont et al., 2008).

Despite the importance of leadership in schools, the challenges and difficulties facing school leaders are many. The issues affecting school leaders include ensuring consistently good teaching and learning; incorporating a sound understanding of basic knowledge and skills into a large and balanced curriculum; managing actions and attendance; managing resources and

the atmosphere strategically; building the school as a community of professional learning; and creating partnerships outside the school to promote parental support for learning and new learning opportunities (Education Development Trust, 2014).

According to the Education Development Trust (2014), the main aspects of effective leadership are: defining the mission, principles and direction; improving teaching and learning conditions; redesigning the organization: aligning roles and responsibilities; improving teaching and learning; redesigning and enriching the curriculum; improving the quality of teachers (including succession planning); building relationships within the school community; building relationships outside the school community; and placing an emphasis on common values. The Education Development Trust (2014) also identified the key dimensions of successful leadership:

• defining the vision, values and direction
• improving conditions for teaching and learning
• redesigning the organisation: aligning roles and responsibilities
• enhancing teaching and learning
• redesigning and enriching the curriculum
• enhancing teacher quality (including succession planning)
• building relationships inside the school community
• building relationships outside the school community
• placing an emphasis on common values.

It is necessary to consider the theory of leadership that this study promotes before moving on to the review of school leadership policies (Pont et al., 2008).

One of the most effective theories is transformational leadership. By searching for their potential motivations, it identifies and exploits the current needs or demands of followers, attempts to fulfil these higher needs, and activates the abilities of followers. The strengths of this type of leadership lie in its mutual vision and clear cooperation with all workers (English, 2006).

If schools and colleges are to achieve the sizeable goals set for them by their many stakeholders, especially the governments that provide much of the funding for public educational institutions, effective leadership and management are increasingly considered necessary. To sustain and boost productivity in an increasingly global economy, a trained workforce is crucial. In a rapidly changing world, society needs schools, colleges and universities to prepare people for jobs. Teachers, and their leaders and managers, are expected to deliver higher educational standards. There is a common belief that the secret to improving schools is raising standards of leadership and management so that the school can, in turn, train and grow the next generation of leaders. Although this is the focus of this book, the essence of leadership and management in schools has been discussed previously. What leadership practices are most likely to yield beneficial results for schools and learners? The next chapter looks at the major models of school leadership and takes into account the evidence of their relative success in fostering school change (Bush, 2008).

To achieve successful school leadership, leaders must be qualified in leadership styles and methods. Bush (2008) has shown that, increasingly, good leadership is seen as a critical component of successful organisations. As leaders adjust to the requirements of their current posts, the process of professional and organizational socialisation is often unpleasant. It takes structured planning to establish the knowledge, qualities and skills needed to lead effectively. As the stresses on school principals have increased, awareness of the value of specialized

training and development has risen. The greater complexity of school contexts has also increased the need for planning, related to the shift towards site-based management. The moral foundation for specific training is also recognized, and a growing body of evidence indicates that learning makes a difference to the standard of leadership and to the performance of schools and pupils. The essence of leadership development initiatives, including content and process.

Conclusion

Successful school leadership requires leaders to have many distinctive characteristics that help the school reach its goals at the student, teacher, and societal levels. Furthermore, success can be achieved in all parts of the school when the staff trusts the leader. According to Hao and Yazdanifard (2015), if the employees or members of the community trust their leaders, then this means that the leaders are efficient and successful.

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