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An Examination of Charismatic Leadership Among School Heads with a Focus on Empathy

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Original Article

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Keywords

Comparisons, Gender, Management, Charismatic Leadership, Public High school, Powerful Trait

Abstract

The study examined the charismatic leadership qualities of school heads in Dera Ghazi Khan, focusing particularly on their empathy. A descriptive methodology was used, targeting a population of 1,536 individuals from public schools, including male and female heads, teachers, and students. Data were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire employing a Likert-scale rating system, validated through a pilot study. Results indicated notable differences in charismatic leadership traits between male and female leaders, teachers, and administrators in public schools. The study also emphasized the critical role of secondary-level school principals as intellectual leaders who significantly impact students' motivation and engagement. The analysis employed percentages, means, standard deviations, t-tests, and ANOVA. While both male and female leaders exhibited charismatic qualities, women were found to excel in empathy, humility, vision, respect, innovation, empowerment, honesty, care for others, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Max Weber reintroduced the concept of "charisma," originally from religious contexts, into political and social discourse in the early 1900s, where it referred to a "gift of grace." By the mid-1920s, charisma attracted attention in fields like psychology, business management, and political science. Over time, various definitions of charisma emerged, emphasizing its ability to capture attention and influence others. Charisma is seen as a powerful trait, as charismatic individuals inspire people and positively impact their surroundings. Charismatic leadership, which involves collaboration, coordination, and commitment, drives teams toward success.

Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson (2003) describe charismatic leadership as the ability to resonate with followers' emotions, with empathy being a key factor. Leaders who demonstrate empathy foster emotional connections with their teams. When leaders acknowledge and validate others' feelings, they build trust and commitment among their followers. This empathy deepens the leader's influence, motivating and engaging their teams by showing genuine care.

Empathy plays a crucial role in leadership, as noted by Colby (2011). Taking time to understand others' emotions strengthens bonds and enhances leadership effectiveness. Parks (2005)

emphasizes that sometimes, leaders should focus on listening and offering support rather than rushing to solve problems. By being present and empathetic, leaders can build stronger relationships.

When communicating, it is important to give undivided attention, as Papandrea (2008) suggests. Distracted behavior during conversations, such as checking mobile devices, can hinder meaningful connections. Instead, being fully present fosters better interactions.

Finally, when offering advice or sharing perspectives, leaders should approach with care. Harsh or unsolicited responses can quickly damage trust, as Edmondson (2011) points out. Leaders who respond kindly, even when correcting misunderstandings, maintain the respect and rapport they have built.

Leadership

A leader inspires others through their actions, abilities, and vision. Effective leadership involves the ability to accomplish significant tasks while gaining the respect of followers. True leaders adapt to the needs of their team, set clear goals, and envision a collective future that benefits everyone. They are not solely focused on personal achievements but rather prioritize the success of the entire team. Such leaders instill passion, enthusiasm, and inspiration in those they lead, ensuring that the team's success is their priority. According to Cappelli (2010), leadership is most effective when it originates from grassroots efforts, encouraging collaboration and shared objectives, rather than being imposed through a top-down approach.

Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leadership is a dynamic style that captivates and motivates others through personal charm and influence. Leaders with charismatic traits often create a strong emotional bond with their followers, inspiring full engagement in achieving the leader's vision and overcoming obstacles (Barbuto, 2005). As noted by Conger (2011), charismatic leadership is pivotal because it provides a clear, compelling vision that drives motivation and fosters the growth of organizations. This leadership style is characterized by a deep-rooted concern for the community, with leaders adapting their approach to meet the needs and expectations of their followers, ensuring a cohesive and motivated team.

History of Charismatic Leadership

Max Weber, a renowned German economist, introduced the concept of charismatic leadership in his 1922 work, where he contrasted the authority derived from political duty with the powerful influence of charisma. Weber asserted that charismatic authority depends more on the leader's attributes than their specific actions. He outlined three core components of charisma: the leader's innate personality, social traits, and the emotional bond formed with their followers. In his 1958 book, *The Legitimate Rule*, Weber explained that charismatic leaders build strong emotional connections with their followers, but these relationships diminish if the bonds are broken.

Expanding on Weber's foundation, House et al. (2004) further described charismatic leaders as individuals who inspire profound commitment and dedication from their followers. Such leaders are characterized by their passion, energy, and devotion, with figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Steve Jobs, and President Barack Obama serving as prominent examples. Their leadership style is centered around creating a compelling vision that motivates and engages followers at an emotional level.

Charismatic Leadership Compared to Other Leadership Styles

Ehrhart and Klein (2001) emphasize that each leader brings unique traits that influence their team's dynamics. Charismatic leaders, in particular, stand out due to their ability to form deeper, more meaningful connections with their followers. These connections help foster both organizational growth and individual motivation. What differentiates charismatic leadership is its clear vision, combined with a flexible and less rigid approach compared to more traditional

leadership models. This exploratory nature allows for innovation and adaptation, encouraging a more engaged and motivated workforce. Through these connections, charismatic leaders inspire commitment and drive performance toward collective success.

Empathy in Charismatic Leadership

In the context of charismatic leadership, empathy refers to a leader's ability to understand, connect with, and respond to the emotions and perspectives of their followers (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). This type of empathetic leadership fosters strong organizational relationships, promoting trust and mutual understanding. Empathetic leaders listen carefully and make their followers feel valued and heard, which in turn boosts their dedication and willingness to follow the leader's direction.

Colby (2011) underscores the importance of genuinely listening and showing compassion for effective leadership. Parks (2005) suggests that leaders should prioritize listening and offering support before jumping to solve problems. Moreover, leaders should avoid distractions such as mobile devices during conversations, as Papandrea (2008) points out, to maintain focus and respect in interactions.

Edmondson (2011) further stresses that constructive feedback, delivered with empathy and respect, strengthens relationships and encourages improvement. By addressing mistakes with sensitivity, leaders create an environment conducive to growth and collaboration.

The Rationale of the Study

Flynn and Staw (2004) explored how the perception of strong leadership impacts learning and organizational outcomes. In this study, the aim is to investigate the effect of leadership on educational outcomes, focusing on whether expectations from school leaders, parents, and teachers are being met to achieve the best results for all stakeholders. The research assessed secondary school heads in Dera Ghazi Khan, analyzing their leadership about school success and progress, with results ranging from average to excellent. This pioneering research offers valuable insight into the educational leadership of the region.

Additionally, the study delved into the performance of school leaders whose leadership fell below expectations, examining whether their charismatic style further impacted their effectiveness. It also compared the efficiency of classroom management under traditional versus charismatic leadership styles, providing a broader understanding of how leadership influences day-to-day activities and overall school effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Charismatic leadership style of secondary school heads by evaluating twelve core factors: communication, humility, empathy, respect for others, vision, honesty, care for people, creativity, emotional intelligence, self-motivation, empowerment, and problem-solving.

The study highlights gender differences in charismatic leadership among public secondary school heads in Dera Ghazi Khan, emphasizing how male and female leaders may exhibit these traits differently. Furthermore, the necessity of active supervision by school heads is stressed, as effective leadership relies not only on charisma but also on consistent, hands-on management of school activities to foster a positive learning environment. This is crucial for ensuring that the charismatic leadership style translates into practical, tangible outcomes for both teachers and students.

The findings offer valuable insights into how leadership styles, particularly charismatic ones, can drive school improvement and positively influence the emotional well-being of learners.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research study were as follows:

1. **To explore the perspectives of participants** (students, teachers, and heads) regarding the **empathy of secondary school heads** in Dera Ghazi Khan. This objective seeks to understand how various stakeholders perceive the empathetic behavior of school heads and how it influences relationships and school culture.
2. **To compare and contrast the perspectives of participants** (students, teachers, and heads) on the **charismatic leadership** of secondary school heads in Dera Ghazi Khan. This includes:
 - a. **Differentiating participants' observations** (students, teachers, and heads) concerning the **empathy demonstrated by secondary school heads** in the region, specifically focusing on variations in perceptions across the different groups.

These objectives aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of both empathy and charismatic leadership in the context of secondary school heads, with particular emphasis on stakeholder insights and differences in perception.

Significance of the Study

The study held significance for the following reasons:

- It aimed to explore the future impact of different charismatic leadership styles, assessing whether these effects were positive or negative.
- It evaluated various teaching methods to determine their effectiveness and utility.
- It sought to identify areas for improvement in teaching practices to enhance educational outcomes.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focused specifically on the following aspects:

Geographical Scope: It examined male and female public secondary school stakeholders exclusively in the southern areas of Dera Ghazi Khan. **Participant Groups:** It included only those directly involved in the educational process: leaders, vice principals, teachers, and students in public secondary schools. **Variable of Interest:** The study concentrated solely on the variable of empathy within charismatic leadership.

Research Methodology

Design of the Study

In this study, a descriptive research design was used to identify the current extent of charismatic leadership among secondary school heads in the southern areas of Dera Ghazi Khan. This design is intended to capture and portray the nature and features of a phenomenon or population in focus. It involves gathering, quantifying, and interpreting information on behaviors, beliefs, conditions, or attributes as found within their natural environment.

The work entitled “Charismatic Leadership of School Heads Regarding Empathy” employed descriptive research to ensure a methodical understanding of the positions and perspectives of principals, teachers, and students. Descriptive research involves observing, documenting, and analyzing data on the qualities of an object or subject without altering natural processes. This approach provides a clear description of the current state of affairs, addressing questions of who, what, when, and where.

Descriptive research involves collecting data to describe the characteristics of measured or observed variables using tools like surveys, case studies, and content analysis. This design is useful when the researcher aims to determine the existing state of a subject, gather information, and develop theories without altering the normal setting.

Population

In research, the term “population” refers to the entire group of people, objects, or things that possess characteristics of interest in a given investigation. This population often includes a wide spectrum of subjects relevant to the research. In this study, the population consisted of male and female principals of secondary schools in the southern part of Dera Ghazi Khan, as well as their teachers and students.

Table#1: Population of the study

| Districts | Stakeholders | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------|------------|--------|----------|--------|
| | Students | | Principals | | Teachers | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| D.G.Khan | 17014 | 13547 | 100 | 62 | 2230 | 1720 |
| Total | 30561 | | 162 | | 3950 | |

Source: Esdss: Annual School Census (2019-20)

Sample of the Study

A sample is a subset of a larger population and represents a smaller segment selected from the whole group. In statistical terms, a sample is a carefully chosen portion of the larger population, intended to accurately and reliably reflect the characteristics of the entire group. For this study, the sample selection was guided by Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, which provides a method for determining appropriate sample sizes based on the overall population.

Table#2: Sample of the Study

| Districts | Stakeholders | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------|------------|--------|----------|--------|
| | Students | | Principals | | Teachers | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| D.G.Khan | 377 | 375 | 80 | 56 | 331 | 317 |
| Total | 752 | | 136 | | 648 | |

Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling method was used to select principals, teachers, and students for the study. This technique ensures that various subgroups, or strata, within the population are adequately represented. The process involves dividing the population into distinct groups based on characteristics such as age or gender. Random samples are then drawn from each subgroup, and these samples are combined to create a final sample that accurately reflects the entire population.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection in this study. According to Creswell (2014), a questionnaire is a crucial instrument in social science research, particularly in survey studies. It consists of statements and questions on specific topics that respondents are required to address and confirm.

Mode of Data Collection

The study focused on public secondary schools in the southern district of D.G. Khan. The sample included principals, teachers, and students from these schools. Using a stratified random sampling method, the researcher selected participants to ensure representation across various subgroups. The researcher then visited the selected schools in person to collect data from the principals, teachers and students.

Validity of Research Tool

The scoring tool for the study, based on a five-point Likert scale, was developed and validated through a thorough process. This tool was informed by previous research, feedback from office workers, and insights from experienced educators. To ensure its accuracy, fifteen education

experts reviewed the tool. Initially, the researcher compiled a list of 92 questions, which were evaluated by the experts. Their feedback was categorized into three options: approved, revised, and rejected. Based on their suggestions, necessary corrections were made to address language errors, grammatical issues, and ambiguities. Consequently, some items were removed, resulting in a final set of 88 questions.

Pilot Testing

Hinton et al. (2004) recommend using the smallest sample size for calculating the standard deviation to ensure accuracy. After completing the validity testing and finalizing the tool, it was employed in a pilot study. This study involved a sample of 1,536 individuals, including 648 teachers, 136 principals, and 752 students from various schools in the Dera Ghazi Khan region.

Reliability of Research (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient)

Reliability refers to the ability to measure variables in a way that yields accurate and consistent results. According to Mohajon (2018), it ensures that the study is accurate, dependable, and valid. The Cronbach's Alpha test showed that the 84 revised items had an internal consistency coefficient of 0.780, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability.

Methods of Data Collection

Data collection is a critical component of the quantitative research process. For this study, a measurable research method was used, involving a questionnaire distributed to participants. The researcher collected data in person by visiting secondary schools in D.G. Khan, verifying the accuracy of respondents' contact details and addresses before proceeding. The response rate was considered satisfactory.

Analysis of Statistics

As a result, these ways of looking at the facts were used:

1. A simple percentage was also used in the data analysis.
2. The figure for the average score was used. The range of mean values is from 0 to 5 because the study used a 5-point Likert scale. Any answer that got 2.5 or more was good enough.
3. t-tests, mean, and standard deviation were used to look at the data. The t-statistics score was found with both a paper tool and an online calculator.
4. An ANOVA test was also done to look at the differences between the different parties.
5. An arithmetic mean and a population-mean t-test can be used to find the average (Atta, 2014, p.69). According to Chaudhry & Kamal (1996), the range of the population (π_2) is often known, and sample data can be used to run a t-test. "Putting to the test hypotheses about differences in the means of two normal populations that are unknown" (P.249).

Table#3: Replies of participants about Charismatic Leadership Regarding Empathy. (Inline objective 1c)

| Stakeholders | Gender | Empathy | | | | | | | | | | Total Respondents |
|--------------|--------|---------|-------|-----|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------------------|
| | | SA | | A | | UD | | DA | | SDA | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | |
| Principals | F | 9 | 16.09 | 42 | 75.01 | 1 | 1.79 | 3 | 5.35 | 1 | 1.79 | 56 |
| | M | 3 | 03.75 | 12 | 15.01 | 9 | 11.26 | 48 | 60.00 | 8 | 10.01 | 80 |
| Teachers | F | 28 | 8.45 | 254 | 76.74 | 11 | 3.24 | 26 | 7.85 | 12 | 3.63 | 331 |
| | M | 9 | 2.83 | 25 | 7.89 | 12 | 3.79 | 247 | 77.91 | 24 | 7.58 | 317 |
| Students | F | 42 | 11.02 | 296 | 78.94 | 5 | 1.34 | 30 | 8.00 | 2 | 0.54 | 375 |
| | M | 6 | 1.59 | 36 | 9.55 | 5 | 1.33 | 293 | 77.71 | 37 | 9.82 | 377 |

The table presents the stakeholders' observations of the charismatic leadership of principals from an empathy perspective. Among the principals, 75% of females and 15% of males supported the charismatic leadership approach, while 35% of females and 60% of males disagreed. For teachers, 76.73% of females and 7% of males endorsed the approach. Males had a mean score of 88% for charismatic leadership support from the empathy analysis, while females had 77%. According to the research, 85% of female students and 77% of male students favored the newly introduced uniform, while 91% of males disagreed. Additionally, 3% of the teachers had no preference for the type of curriculum taught in schools, with 22% of females and 78% of males expressing preferences. Among students, 93% of females and 54% of males supported the charismatic leadership approach, while 8% of females and 77% of males did not.

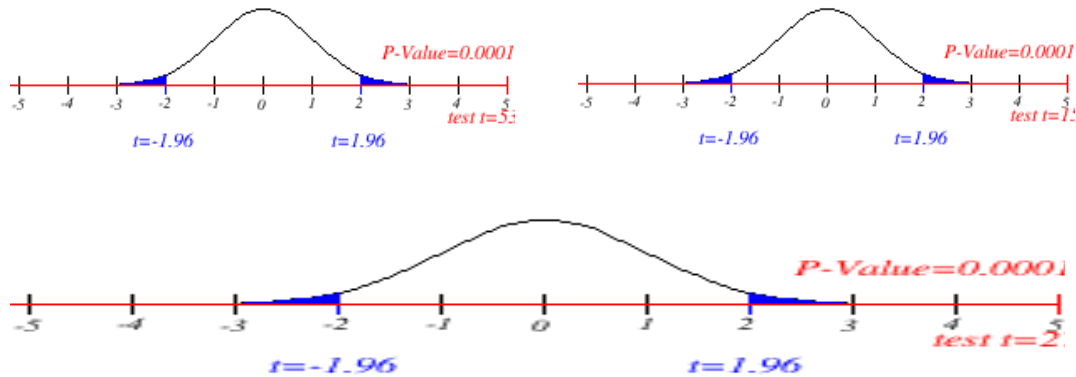
Table#4 Charismatic Leadership of School Heads Regarding Empathy

| Stakeholders | Gender | A. Empathy | | | Gender Comparison | | | Stakeholders Comparison | | |
|--------------|--------|------------|------|------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | | N | Mean | S.D | t _{cal} | t _{tab} | P _{-value} | F _{-cal} | F _{-tab} | P _{-value} |
| Principals | F | 56 | 3.85 | 0.39 | 15.63 | ±1.96 | 0.000 | 51.41 | 2.60 | 0.0001 |
| | M | 80 | 2.64 | 0.50 | | | | | | |
| Teachers | F | 331 | 3.94 | 0.36 | 53.87 | ±1.96 | 0.000 | | | |
| | M | 317 | 2.20 | 0.49 | | | | | | |
| Students | F | 375 | 3.57 | 0.33 | 29.78 | ±1.96 | 0.000 | | | |
| | M | 377 | 2.67 | 0.54 | | | | | | |

The table also shows the mean values of 'empathy' within the charismatic leadership framework, which range from 2.19 to 3.92, indicating a positive impact on charismatic leadership. Differences in responses among Principals, Teachers, and Students are highlighted by t-calculated values of 15 for gender differences, with t-values of 6.252, 53.8521, and 29.7689 and corresponding P-values of 0.000 for each. These findings indicate the effects of gender on charismatic leadership about empathy. Additionally, the F-calculated value of 51.39, regarding differences in perception

between Principals, Teachers, and Students, is higher than the F-tabulated value of 2.05. This suggests that the observed variation in perceptions correlates with the stakeholders involved. The age limit for participants was arbitrarily set at 60, with a P-value of 0.0001, which is below the 0.05 threshold, indicating significant variation in perception related to age.

Figure#2: Charismatic Leadership of School Heads Regarding Empathy



All variables of charismatic leadership are discussed below:

Discussions Charismatic leadership of heads regarding Empathy

In the charismatic leadership style, a critical component is the ability of leaders to build deep bonds with their followers. Charismatic leaders use their empathy to understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of their followers. Males are often noted for their proficiency in receiving information, acknowledging others' experiences, and expressing feelings to employees (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By demonstrating empathy, these leaders develop strong affective relationships, foster affiliation, and create a positive organizational climate focused on people's welfare. Bass and Riggio's work on transformational leadership highlights the importance of empathy in leadership. Incorporating empathy into charismatic leadership helps leaders build trust, loyalty, and commitment from their followers, thereby improving leadership outcomes.

Conclusion Charismatic leadership of heads regarding Empathy

The findings revealed that a higher percentage of female principals agreed with the importance of empathy in charismatic leadership compared to male principals. This suggests that female principals may have a more effective leadership approach, characterized by better understanding and empathy, compared to their male counterparts.

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