

EXPLORING THE DIMENSIONS OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE PRACTICED BY THE SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS IN PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the quantitative study was to explore the dimensions of authentic leadership style and the seven habits of highly effective people practiced by the secondary school heads in Punjab. The objectives of the study were: (1) to analyze the dimensions of authentic leadership styles and the seven habits of highly effective people practiced by the secondary school heads in Punjab. The population of the study was all (42) Districts of the Province of Punjab, all (8087) Secondary Schools in the Province of Punjab, all (4178) Headmasters of Secondary Schools of the Province of Punjab, all (3909) Headmistresses of Secondary Schools of the Province of Punjab, and all (45424) Secondary School Teachers of Public Secondary School of Punjab. A multistage purposive stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The population of the study consisted of many subgroups or strata, i.e., Rural and urban, male and female, so a stratified purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data was collected using four Questionnaires, two of which were designed on a five-point Likert scale and two on a six-point Likert scale related to the seven habits of highly effective and authentic leadership style. Self-reported authentic leadership styles and views about secondary school teachers were analyzed by considering the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People as defined by Covey. The initial stage was "Level of Independence" where educational leaders were measured by using the first three habits: "Be Proactive", "Begin with the end in mind", and "Put first things first". Those educational leaders who were successful at this Level were considered to measure "the level of interdependence" and usefulness at the Second Stage by means of the next three habits: "Think win/win", "Seek first to understand then to be understood", and "Synergize". Those educational leaders who remained effective at the Second Level were considered to find out the level of Continuous improvement by using the habit "Sharpen the Saw". The major verdicts of the study were that the existing leadership style of the secondary school leaders in the Punjab Education Department was satisfactory, but not up to the global market. The final recommendations were made to provide clear guidelines for the selection of the leaders, and to establish a specific cell to inculcate and enhance the seven habits of highly effective people among the school leaders, therefore meeting the quality education and global market. The first dimension of AL self-awareness is integrated habits, such as sharpening the saw and being proactive.

Keywords: Dimensions Authentic Leadership, Seven Habits, effective people, Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a vital role in shaping organizational culture, motivating employees, and driving educational improvement. In schools, leadership styles directly influence teaching strategies, learning environments, teacher motivation, and overall institutional performance (Day et al., 2016; Walumbwa et al., 2018). Ineffective or unethical leadership, however, generates disappointment, weak governance, and poor educational outcomes, which remain significant challenges in Pakistan's education system (UNESCO, 2018). Authentic leadership, introduced as a model emphasizing ethics, self-awareness, and positive influence (Northouse, 2013; Luthans & Avolio, 2020), has gained recognition as an effective style for fostering teacher engagement, collaboration, and student success (Makhadmeh et al., 2023). Alongside, Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* provide a practical framework for personal and professional effectiveness, linking leadership behaviors with organizational growth (Faisal, et al. 2023).

In the context of Punjab, school leaders face growing pressures of globalization, technological development, and educational reforms such as the Punjab Education Sector Reforms Program (PESRP). However, limited research in Pakistan has examined how authentic leadership interacts with Covey's seven habits in school leadership. While studies abroad highlight their impact on academic achievement and leadership effectiveness (Shetty et al., 2021; Ahmad, 2021), the gap in indigenous research persists.

Therefore, this study finds out the dimensions of authentic leadership and the seven habits of highly effective people among secondary school heads in Punjab. It aims to explore how these practices contribute to school improvement, teacher motivation, and educational quality, thereby addressing a critical need for effective leadership in Pakistan's education sector (Abbas & Faisal, et al., 2024).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study investigates the authentic leadership dimensions and the seven habits of highly effective people among secondary school heads in Punjab. It aims to identify which habits existed among the secondary school heads, and

how these habits contribute to leadership effectiveness, personal development, and improved school performance. By linking these two frameworks, the study seeks to enhance leadership capacity and provide practical strategies for improving school leadership and educational outcomes in Pakistan.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to analyze the dimensions of authentic leadership style and the seven habits of highly effective people practiced by the secondary school heads in Punjab.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following, research questions were framed for the research objective of this study

RQ1: Which dimensions of the authentic leadership style are practiced by the public secondary school heads in Punjab?

RQ2: To what extent are the secondary school heads self-aware of their internal strengths, energies, and potential?

RQ3: Do secondary school heads have balanced processing and fair-mindedness in their dealings with others?

RQ4: To what extent are relational transparency and a trustworthy environment present among secondary school heads for the followers?

RQ5: To what extent do secondary school heads are practicing ethical and moral values?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study may contribute to the works on leadership at the level of both knowledge and practical skills for educational development through practicing the effectiveness of authentic leadership skills concerning the seven habits of effective people.

- The study presented a holistic framework of personal and professional development.
- It pinpointed the specific barriers and opportunities for bringing change in public secondary schools of Punjab to improve the quality of education.
- The study may provide profound insights for personal and institutional growth. That attracts the consideration of policymakers and school leaders in focusing on effective

leadership styles to achieve the targets of secondary education.

- The study provided value-driven leadership where leaders are accountable to the public and students.
- The study highlighted the leadership culture in educational institutions and provided suggestions to improve educational outcomes.

The study may enhance the effectiveness of educational leaders by distinguishing their usefulness at the levels of independence, interdependence, and continuous improvement. that may improve the organizational culture. It may provide a significant framework to increase the level of performance of the educational leaders at the school level.

The study proposed actionable strategies to improve quality leadership in education.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the shortage of time and resources, the study was delimited to Avolio's four dimensions of authentic leadership: self-awareness, transparency, Balanced processing, and internalized moral. The study was confined to Covey's seven habits of highly effective people and secondary level public schools in Punjab (01 to 10 & 06 to 10).

FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

Covey's study on the seven habits of highly effective people is a positive and individual development framework that enhances long-term achievement. The theory of highly

effective people's effectiveness is based on the idea that success is based on habits and principles instead of traits and techniques. The seven habits of highly effective people consist of three levels. The first level is related to private victory means mastering yourself. The second level is related to public victory means making relationships and working well with others. The third level is related to renewal and growth. In this theory of the seven habits of highly effective people, Covey gave importance to the development of character and improving the ethical behavior of an individual. He focused on a proactive mindset and interdependent relations to achieve long-lasting success. His theory gave a value-driven approach to leadership. The first level is related to the personal victory of an effective person. It begins with a proactive mindset. Priorities are very necessary for success. Keeping in view a definite and clear vision also leads to success. After achieving personal victory, a level comes in an effective person's life when they seek mutual benefits and strong relations in the workplace and business. This person thinks of getting and making himself able to achieve. This stage demands deep listening and understanding. Here, an effective person develops a mindset to work strongly with others with empathetic values. At the level of personal growth and development, an effective person continuously develops themselves with skill and knowledge. He maintains his life and invests in his physical, mental, and spiritual development.

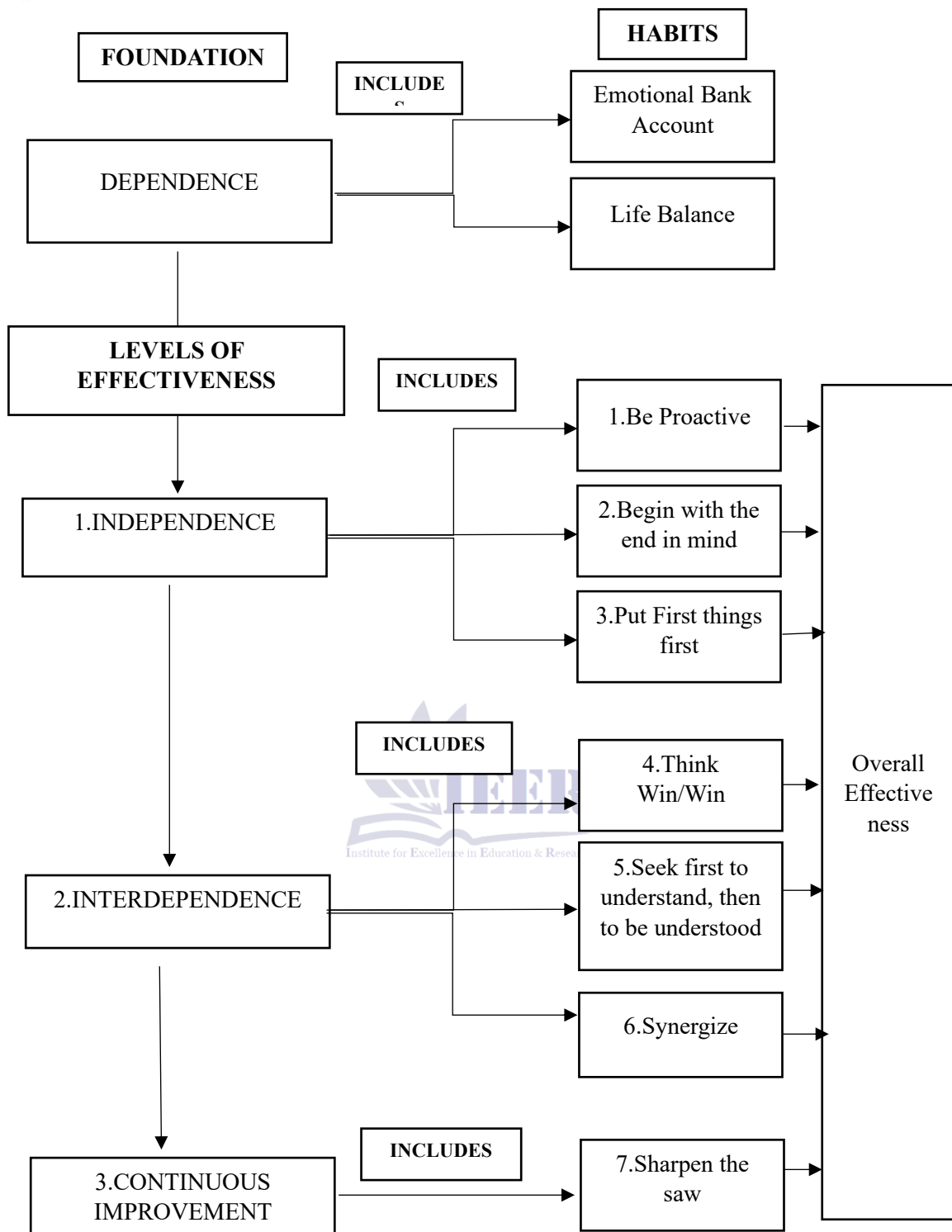


Figure 1: Theoretical Foundation of Covey's Proposed Habits

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Balance processing is the third dimension of authentic leadership. It deals with the behavior, bearing in mind the essential data (Wong, & Laschinger, 2013). The leaders don't ignore the

targets. The fourth dimension of authentic leadership indicates the peculiar behavior of a leader. Ethical values are the expression of the inner self of a leader during external pressures (Walumbwa et al., 2008)

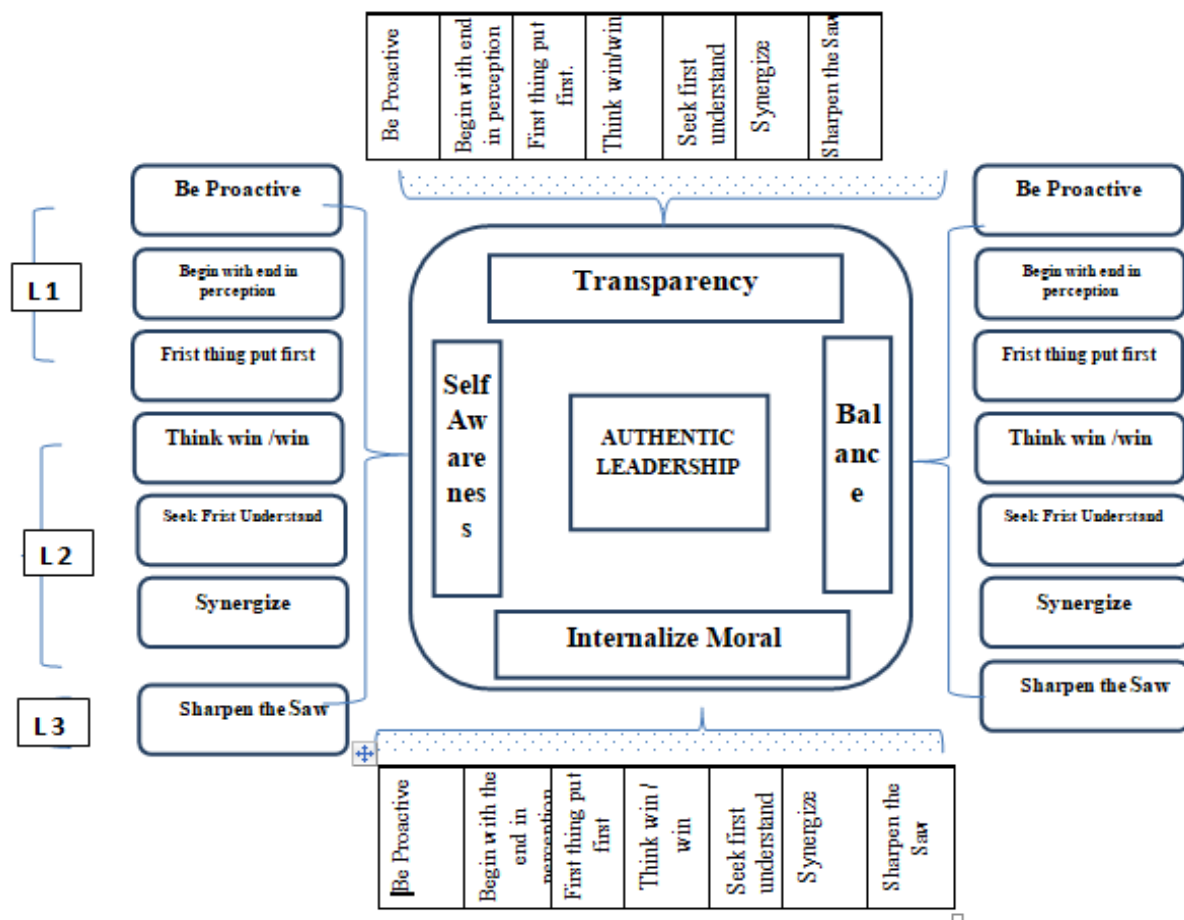


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework

The study find out the seven habits of highly effective people and the dimensions of authentic leadership style. Authentic leaders have transparency, balance, self-awareness, and internalized morality that give confidence to the followers in achieving the set targets. The study explores the dimensions of authentic leadership style and seven habits of highly effective people practiced by secondary school heads in Punjab.

LITERATURE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research shows that effective school leadership is crucial for school improvement and meeting global educational standards (Velez et al., 2017). Leadership not only guides organizational direction but also stimulates the quality of education, which is vital for survival in a globalized world (Abasilim et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2018). Effective leaders inspire commitment, foster teamwork, and ensure

continuous improvement by aligning their leadership style with institutional goals (Louis, 2010). Scholars argue that meaningful innovation in education requires a closer review of educational leaders' leadership styles (Muthoni & Konji, 2015).

Most existing research on Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and school leadership originates from Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding its relevance in Pakistan. Since the attainment of organizational goals largely depends on leadership performance, it is important to explore whether Pakistani school leaders' practices align with these habits. Authentic leadership based in integrities, self-awareness, and positive impact may make available the right framework for this alignment

RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This research was descriptive in character. A descriptive study entails the collection of information without any alteration, such as a change in the environment. The study

employed a quantitative methodology. Quantitative research employs a systematic approach to inquiry that quantifies the collection and analysis of data. Quantitative research employs structured instruments amenable to numerical coding and analysis (Creswell, 2014). In this study, a survey of selected secondary school heads and teachers was conducted. Data were collected through questionnaires. There were two variables: authentic leadership style and the seven habits of effective people. The study finds out dimensions of two variables Test of significance. Both the Seven Habits of Highly Effectuated People and Authentic Leadership are grounded in humanistic philosophy based on the deontological ethics, transformational leadership, and humanistic philosophies which are deeply linked with self-awareness, personal growth, personal effectiveness, and purposed driver action. The SHHEP are related to the theory of effectiveness. The frameworks of both SHHEP and AL related to virtue ethics, exceptionalism and transformational ethics and moral philosophies.

Population of the study

The study's population was as follows:

- All (42) Districts of the Province of Punjab
- All (8087) Secondary Schools in the Province of Punjab.
- All (4178) Headmasters of Secondary Schools in the Province of Punjab.
- All (3909) Headmistresses of Secondary Schools of the Province of Punjab.
- All (45424) Secondary School Teachers of Public Secondary Schools of Punjab. (PMIU, 2023)

Sampling Technique

A multistage stratified purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study. The population of the study consisted of many subgroups or strata; i.e., Rural and urban, male and female, so a stratified non-proportional sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Sampling procedure and size of the Sample

In this study, the researcher applied multistage stratified random sampling to select the sample for the study.

1. At the first stage, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select the 50% districts from 3 strata, i.e., NP (North Punjab), CP (Central Punjab), and SP (South Punjab).
2. At the second stage, schools in the sampled districts were divided into two subgroups, i.e., rural and urban.
3. At the third stage, sampled schools were divided into two strata: male and female strata.
4. At the fourth stage of sampling simple random sampling technique was applied to select sample schools from rural, urban, male, and female strata.
5. The non-proportional sample was applied to draw from each stratum at the fifth stage.
6. 420 Headmaster and Headmistress were taken as samples (210+210).
7. 840 (02 from each school) Male and Female secondary school teachers were taken as samples purposively, as most senior and from the same schools.

Instruments and their development

For the collection of data related to the seven habits of highly effective people, six-point Likert scale questionnaires "Strongly Disagree", "Agree", "Slightly Disagree", "Slightly Disagree", Disagree, and "Strongly Disagree" were designed according to the guidance of the experts. One questionnaire was developed for secondary school leaders/heads, and one related for secondary school teachers was developed. Data related to authentic leadership consisted of a Five-point Likert scale: "neutral", disagree, agree 'strongly agree,' and strongly disagree. The data was collected through an adopted questionnaire, which was originally designed by Walumbwa, Avolio, and Gardner (2007).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data analysis and interpretation find out the seven habits of highly effective people and the authentic leadership style of school heads in public secondary schools across Punjab. This

chapter investigates how these habits are existed and how authentic leadership behaviors demonstrated by school heads. The findings are thoughtfully presented to address the research questions and test the hypotheses, shedding light on leadership practices in educational settings. By employing quantitative techniques, the collected data were systematically processed, organized, and analyzed to uncover meaningful insights. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics, offering valuable perspectives for both theory and practice in leadership development within schools.

The data for this study were gathered from 420 school heads (210 male + 210 female) and 840 secondary school teachers (420 male + 420 female) from public secondary schools across Punjab. The information collected focuses on the implementation of the seven habits of highly effective people and their connection to the authentic leadership style of school heads. By involving both school heads and teachers, the study provides a well-rounded view of leadership practices. It evaluates these practices not only from the self-reported experiences of school heads but also from the perspectives of teachers, who experience the impact of their leadership firsthand. This dual-source approach ensures a more reliable and nuanced understanding of how these habits shape and relate to authentic leadership in educational institutions.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the results retrieved from the quantitative analysis of the data. The findings of the data throw light on the conclusion. The quantitative data were based on the six-point Likert scale and the five-point Likert scale and analyzed through SPSS. The findings of the study pointed to dimensions the AL and the SHHEP among the school leaders /heads. The study sheds light on how Covey's habits supported the leaders in cultivating authenticity, which provides philosophical foundations to authentic leaders. The study investigates how the practices of the SHHEP equipped the leaders to build trust and engaged followers to achieve the set targets. The following are findings on School Heads' Authentic Leadership Styles, and the Seven

Habits of Highly Effective People are given as under:

Analyze the dimensions of authentic leadership style and the seven habits of highly Effective people practiced by the secondary school heads in Punjab.

- **Which dimensions of the authentic leadership style are practiced by the public secondary school heads in Punjab?**

The scores of authentic Leaderships on the four dimensions were calculated on the Likert scale. Self-awareness: School heads exhibit positive self-awareness, with a moderate level of self-reflection. Internalized Moral perspective Strong alignment with core values, with the highest score for the statement "My morals guide me to play the role of a lead. Transparency: 67% of respondents agree they are transparent on controversial issues. Balanced Processing: 72% of school heads prefer consulting others before making decisions

- **To what extent are the secondary school heads self-aware of their internal strengths, energies, and potential?**

The school heads/leaders have high self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, with 60% of respondents agreeing they can list their weaknesses. Feedback Seeking: 47% seek feedback to understand themselves, but variability exists in feedback behavior Self-Acceptance: 60% demonstrate positive self-acceptance

- **Do the secondary school heads have balanced processing and fair-mindedness in their dealings with others?**

72% of school heads prefer consulting others before making decisions

- **To what extent are relational transparency and a trustworthy environment present among secondary school heads for the followers?**

Relational Transparency: Transparency: 67% of respondents agree they are transparent on controversial issues .School heads value authenticity, with 60% letting others know who they truly are .**Challenges:** Struggles with presenting a false front and admitting mistakes suggest areas for further development.

- **To what extent are the moral values of the authentic leadership style of public**

secondary schools' leaders related to the independence level, interdependence level, and continuous development level?

Strong alignment with core values, with the highest score for the statement "My morals guide me to play the role of a leader. Resistance to Group Pressure: School heads show weaker resistance to group pressure, indicating room for improvement. Independence and Leadership Qualities: High Professional Independence: School heads demonstrate a strong focus on staff relationships and efficient time management. Conflict Resolution: There is room for growth in conflict resolution skills. Collaboration and Feedback Seeking: School heads exhibit high interdependence, valuing collaboration and feedback. Feedback Seeking: Strong openness to feedback, with high self-awareness of challenges. Problem-Solving: School heads show a problem-solving focus, seeking long-term solutions and understanding problems before solving them. Continuous Development: School heads demonstrate commitment to personal and professional growth, with a focus on self-improvement. Leadership Communication: Clear communication of expectations and goals. Self-Confidence: Strong sense of self, perceiving themselves as equal to their colleagues.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer valuable insights into the genuine leadership styles demonstrated by school leaders and their correspondence with the principles delineated in Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The findings underscore essential aspects of authentic leadership, such as self-awareness, internalised moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Each of these aspects helps us understand how school leaders do their jobs and how they affect the learning environments they create.

Positive Self-Reflection: The data indicate that school heads possess a commendable level of self-awareness, particularly regarding their strengths and weaknesses. With mean scores of 3.63 for strengths and 3.65 for weaknesses, it is evident that a majority (60%) can accurately identify their areas for improvement. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes

the importance of self-awareness in effective leadership (Hartung, 2020). However, the finding that only 47% actively seek feedback suggests a potential area for growth. Encouraging a culture of feedback could enhance leaders' understanding of their impact on staff and students, ultimately fostering a more reflective practice (Brown, 2020). **Self-Acceptance** Furthermore, the study reveals that 60% of respondents demonstrate positive self-acceptance. This characteristic is vital for authentic leaders as it enables them to remain grounded in their values while navigating the complexities of their roles (Integrity Coaching, 2020).

The findings show a strong alignment with core values among school heads, as evidenced by the high mean score for the statement regarding moral guidance in leadership. This indicates that school heads prioritize ethical decision-making and transparency, with 67% agreeing they are open about controversial issues. Such transparency fosters trust within the school community, which is essential for effective leadership (Duignan, 2006). **Resistance to Group Pressure** Despite these strengths, the lower score on resistance to group pressure suggests that school heads may struggle to maintain their moral compass in challenging situations. This highlights an area where further development is needed to ensure that leaders can uphold their values amidst external pressures.

Consultative Decision-Making A notable finding is that 72% of school heads prefer consulting others before making decisions, indicating a commitment to collaborative leadership practices. This consultative approach aligns with Covey's emphasis on interdependence and collaboration as essential habits for effective leadership. However, while 73% listen to differing viewpoints, there remains room for improvement in actively considering these perspectives before finalizing decisions.

The data indicate that school heads value authenticity, with 60% allowing others to see who they truly are. Yet challenges remain in presenting a false front and admitting mistakes. These struggles suggest that while leaders may strive for transparency, they may still grapple

with vulnerability an essential trait for authentic leadership.

The analysis reveals no significant differences in authentic leadership styles based on gender, location (urban vs. rural), or role (Head Masters vs. In-charge Heads). This finding underscores the universality of authentic leadership traits across diverse contexts within educational settings.

School heads exhibit high levels of professional independence and efficient time management, reflecting a strong commitment to fostering positive staff relationships and effective operational practices. However, there is identified room for growth in conflict resolution skills, suggesting that enhancing these capabilities could further strengthen their leadership effectiveness.

A commitment to continuous professional growth is evident among school heads, with a focus on self-improvement and clear communication of expectations and goals. These attributes are crucial for maintaining relevance and effectiveness in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

Moderate positive correlations between self-awareness and both independence and continuous development suggest that enhancing self-awareness could bolster leaders' overall effectiveness. Moreover, regression analysis identifies independence and interdependence as strong predictors of authentic leadership.

In conclusion, this study illustrates that school heads demonstrate authentic leadership qualities while also revealing areas for further development, particularly in relational transparency and conflict resolution skills. The minimal influence of demographic factors on leadership practices indicates that authentic leadership is a pervasive quality among school heads across various contexts. These findings contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of effective educational leadership and offer pathways for future research focused on enhancing authentic leadership practices within schools. This discussion is in line with what other researchers have said about authentic leadership in education. It stresses how important self-awareness, moral integrity, and relational transparency are for creating

good school environments (Yates, 2014; Michel et al., 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on research findings and discussion.

This study finds out the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and the authentic leadership style of school heads in public secondary schools in Punjab. The key findings highlight that school heads generally exhibit positive authentic leadership characteristics, such as strong self-awareness, a clear alignment with core moral values, transparency, and openness to diverse perspectives. The school heads also demonstrate high levels of interdependence and commitment to continuous personal and professional development, which aligns with the foundational principles of the Seven Habits. School heads exhibit moderate to strong levels of self-awareness, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, though areas such as seeking feedback and self-acceptance show some room for improvement.

School heads demonstrate a strong alignment with their core values, especially in the role of a leader, and are transparent in their positions on controversial issues. However, there is variability in their ability to resist group pressure, suggesting the need for further growth in maintaining moral integrity under challenging circumstances.

The findings indicate that school heads actively seek input from others and listen to dissenting viewpoints, reflecting an openness to diverse perspectives. However, there is a moderate level of inconsistency in listening to others' ideas before making decisions.

School heads generally value authenticity in their interactions, though challenges remain in areas such as admitting mistakes and avoiding the presentation of false fronts. These aspects require further attention to promote deeper relational transparency.

The study found no significant differences in authentic leadership practices based on gender, location (rural vs. urban), or role (Head Masters vs. In-charge Heads). This suggests that authentic leadership is universally valued and practiced by school heads across these demographic categories.

School heads exhibit high levels of professional independence, demonstrating confidence in managing tasks, fostering relationships with employees, and taking responsibility for success. While they show strong conflict resolution skills, there is room for improvement in this area.

This research demonstrates that the practice of authentic leadership among school heads is largely characterized by self-awareness, ethical decision-making, relational transparency, and a commitment to professional growth. The findings suggest that school leaders who integrate the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People into their leadership styles foster positive relationships, engage in reflective practices, and actively seek personal and professional development. However, areas such as improving conflict resolution and enhancing relational transparency through more open admission of mistakes and avoiding false fronts offer opportunities for further development. The lack of significant differences based on gender, location, and role further underscores the universality of authentic leadership across different contexts within Punjab's public secondary schools. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between leadership habits and authentic leadership styles, providing valuable guidance for the development of school leadership training programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational leaders should include the principles of authentic leadership and the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People into professional development programs. This will not only enhance the leadership potentials of future school heads but also help in developing a deeper consideration of self-awareness, relational transparency, and ethical decision-making.

As the study highlights the importance of continuous development for effective leadership, the school education department should design programs that foster lifelong learning. Workshops, sessions, and mentorship programs should be introduced to encourage self-reflection and feedback-seeking behaviors among school leaders.

Given that the study identifies areas of improvement in conflict resolution and relational transparency, moral value, and the seven habits of highly effective people should provide explicit training in these "soft skills" to help future school heads navigate complex interpersonal dynamics in their schools.

Governments should provide fund for professional development new steps of creativities for school leaders that emphasis on authentic leadership, with specific weight on the integration of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Policies should reassure and offer resources for continuous leadership training, deep practices, and ethical decision-making. Govt should foster an environment that values authentic leadership qualities such as transparency, ethical behavior, and self-awareness. This could include creating platforms for peer feedback and mentoring, which would help school leaders in their ongoing development. They should certify effective habits and leadership practices, offering equal access to training for all school heads, regardless of their gender, location, or role. Programs should be designed to cater to the unique needs of both rural and urban school leaders, addressing specific challenges they face.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions are based on research findings and discussion.

The school heads also demonstrate high levels of interdependence and commitment to continuous personal and professional development, which aligns with the foundational principles of the Seven Habit School heads exhibit moderate to strong levels of self-awareness, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, though areas such as seeking feedback and self-acceptance show some room for improvement. School heads demonstrate a strong alignment with their core values, especially in the role of a leader, and are transparent in their positions on controversial issues. However, there is variability in their ability to resist group pressure, suggesting the need for further growth in maintaining moral integrity under challenge.

This research demonstrates that the practice of authentic leadership among school heads is

largely characterized by self-awareness, ethical decision-making, relational transparency, and a commitment to professional growth. The findings suggest that school leaders who integrate the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People into their leadership styles foster positive relationships, engage in reflective practices, and actively seek personal and professional development. However, areas such as improving conflict resolution and enhancing relational transparency through more open admission of mistakes and avoiding false fronts offer opportunities for further development. The lack of significant differences based on gender, location, and role further underscores the universality of authentic leadership across different contexts within Punjab's public secondary schools. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between leadership habits and authentic leadership styles, providing valuable guidance for the development of school leadership training programs.

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