
**UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICALITY OF
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
STANDARDS: PERCEPTION OF SECONDARY
AND HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL
HEADTEACHERS OF SHAHEED BENAZIRABAD
AND HYDERABAD DIVISIONS**

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ABSTRACT

School leadership is of utmost importance. It dominates school activities. The performance of either the best or worst of the school is mostly associated with school leadership. A leader, aware of his responsibilities and their practice in the school uplifts the performance of the school. The standards and the skills, that school leaders should have in several countries are well set through policy measures. In Pakistan, our educational system is lingering back because of several reasons along with awareness of school leadership standards by the school head teachers. This study is conducted to know the understanding and practicability of international standards through perceptions of the secondary and higher secondary school head teachers of Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad divisions. The current research study had two

research objectives, 1) the perception of head teachers regarding the understanding of international standards and 2) the practicability of international standards for school heads in Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad divisions. This research study adopted a quantitative research methodology and survey design. The 725 head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools (Male/Female) of Hyderabad and Shaheed Benazirabad Division were a population of the current research study. The sample of 260 was selected through simple. Sample adequacy was ensured through KMO and Bartlett's Test results which were 74.2. Data were collected on a five-point Likert scale a self-designed research questionnaire. The questionnaire's reliability was ensured using Cronbach's Alpha, and so the questionnaire was found reliable at 82.1 percent. The validity of the tool was ensured after a pilot test was conducted on five percent of the sample. The data were analyzed in SPSS 22. V. The mean score, standard deviation, and frequency were used for the result display. The results are shown in self-made graphs and tables made from the default program of the computer, MS Office 2013. Some tables were left from the SPSS. For reference, the APA style of the sixth edition was followed.

KEYWORDS

Perceptions, Standards, Practicality, School Heads, Headteachers, Performance assessment

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Thomas (2010) conducted a research study "Evaluating the School Head Teacher, pointed out seven quality practices for head teachers they should be able to foster friendly workplace relationships, symbolize leadership by being visionary, lead a community to learn, provide instructional and supportive leadership, develop and facilitate school leadership, managing school resources and functioning of school and understanding and re-joining to the larger social setting (Thomas, 2010). It further gave five recommendations for implementation of the Headteachers' Quality Practice guidelines such as developing a policy for headteachers' growth, supervising and evaluating those that reflect their provincial policies in place for teachers, and using a comprehensive, and collective approach to develop policies and procedures, involve administrators to develop the criteria that would be used to evaluate them, focus on to develop clear and meaningful rubrics and, form an element of optional into the evaluation procedures (Thomas, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2017).

In Pakistan and especially in Sindh the head teachers are less skilled and have little knowledge of administrative and leadership practices (Sahito & Perti, 2017; Nawab, 2021). This may be the reason along with other variables, that the educational quality

is going from bad to worse. The major problem in the educational system is that there are no established standards and policy measures for the headteachers for better performance (Khan, 2021). From the very first day of the existence of Pakistan to date, no consistency is found in the educational policies. The inconsistency of the policies is because of the no intake of stakeholders in the policy measures (Ahsan, 2003). Perveen and Syed (2021) found that the policymakers pay little attention to the leadership development of the headteachers by initiating sustainable policies in the education department (Dahri, 2015; Gorchani, Hamid, & Zarrif, 2022). According to Gorchani, Siyal, Jessar, and Jamali (2017), the school headteachers work less effectively in their administrative and managerial practices. The school leaders are mostly promoted from the lower grades to leadership positions based on B. Ed-based seniority validated with the Annual Confidential Reports (Zhongming & Wei, 2019). This restricts the school leaders from availing of current educational knowledge related to / her field.

A school is a place where sharing of new knowledge takes place (Edwards, 2017). The place, teacher, student, and the content in the shape of a book set by the authorities keeping in view the curriculum requirements are the most important ingredients of the educational system (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). To manage an extended number of students, teachers, and other resources, a head teacher is required to run all affairs properly. In most cases, if a head teacher is updated in current knowledge of current practices, he demonstrates his responsibilities effectively. In this respect the leadership performance standards if set, for the headteachers can perform even better than their performance is a day. This research study is intended to study the understanding and practicability of international standards: perceptions of school headteachers in Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad divisions of the province of Sindh Pakistan. To add to the existing knowledge in the literature the research is being carried out under two research questions, a) the perceptions regarding the understanding of international standards and b) the practicability of international standards by the secondary and higher secondary school head teachers of divisions of Shaheed Benazirabad of province of Sindh, Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is deemed and proved to a larger extent that headteachers' performance is dependent upon the responsibilities they have to perform in their schools (Harris, 2013; Malik & Akram, 2020). The performance of the headteachers can be defined in different ways, the responsibilities or the dimensions. The dimensions and the responsibilities are understood as synonyms to some extent if they are meant inferentially. According to Day & Sammons (2014) who have narrated the leadership dimensions for successful leaders, the main point of the leadership dimension is that the head teachers should

ensure improved conditions for teaching and learning, re-designing and enriching the curriculum, restructuring the organization by redesigning the roles and responsibilities, enhancing teacher quality, building up relationships with outside community-enhancing teaching and learning, and building up relationships with the school community. They further insisted on trust-building by developing a vision, mission, values, and directions for the learners' learning, well-being, and achievements, and high expectations. Practical performance is driven by the standards so that the standards work as a road map for the assessing performance of the headteachers in their schools (Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn, & Jackson, 2006). According to Law & Glover (2000), the head teachers' leadership standards of values and qualities are interdependent and are of importance for students' achievements (Day, Sammons, & Gorgen, 2020; Bebell, Steven, & Daniel, 2020). The emphasis of school leadership standards is on the school leaders' administrative and management performance because the administrative and management role of school leaders is of utmost importance in the effective development and functioning of educational institutions (Gorchani, Hamid, & Zarif, 2022).

The standards for the school leaders draw a clear picture of their leadership functions and performance. School leadership standards are understood as the foundation for the headteachers, and they provide direction. It is further proposed that the static standards should be avoided and flexibility should be brought so that they be reviewed over time. It is also proposed that the leadership standards implementation should be monitor able and their influence assessed and evaluated (Lambert & Bouchamma, 2019). The standards for the school headteachers set by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Standards (AITSL, 2015) were later reviewed in 2019, for school administration and management requirements (Simon, Dole & Farragher, 2019). The standards lead towards homogeneity of practices by leaders of educational institutions to be evaluated. Furthermore, the standards are where the leadership can be assessed and evaluated. NBPEA (2015) by the United States of America has set ten standards for their college headteachers/ principals so that better outcomes could be yielded. NBPEA (2015), emphasized that school headteachers must possess the abilities and characteristics to recognize those standards and better observe those. The Organization of Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) is also endeavoring for better educational outcomes in its member countries. The following are school headteacher standards by the USA, NBPEA (2014), and the Organization of Economic and Cultural Development, OECD (2008) respectively:

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
 2. Ethics and Professional Norms
 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
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5. Community of Care and Support for Students
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
9. Operations and Management 10. School Improvement (NBPEA, 2015)

1. Vision and values, 2. Knowledge and understanding, 3. Personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills (AITSL, 2015).

“1. Leading teaching and learning, 2. Developing self and others, 3. Leading improvement, innovation, and change, 4. Leading the management of the school, 5. Engaging and working with the community” (AITSL, 2015).

“1. Supporting, evaluating, and developing teacher quality, 2. Managing the curriculum and teaching program, 3. Teacher monitoring and evaluation, 4. Supporting teacher professional development, 5. Supporting collaborative work cultures” (OECD, 2008).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Study the perceptions regarding the understanding of international standards by the head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools of Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad Divisions.
2. Assess the perceptions regarding the practicability of international standards by the head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools of Shaheed Benazir Abad & Hyderabad Divisions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do the head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools understand the international standards in Shaheed Benazir Abad & Hyderabad Divisions?
2. How much the international standards for head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools are practicable in Shaheed Benazir Abad & Hyderabad Divisions?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research methodology approach was used in the current research study. Survey and descriptive design best fitted to the study in hand. All headteachers (male and female) of 725 secondary and higher secondary schools of Hyderabad and Shaheed Benazir Abad division were the population of the current research study. Shaheed Benazirabad division consists of three districts and the Hyderabad division consists of nine districts. The current research study was conducted in twelve districts of two divisions of the province of Sindh, Pakistan. At first, the researcher made three clusters of all six administrative divisions of the Sindh. Those clusters were made based on

their geographical existence, the central divisions’ cluster, the north-western divisions’ cluster, and the south-east-north divisions’ cluster with equal weightage of population. In cluster one, the central divisions included Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad divisions, in cluster two the north-western divisions included Karachi and Larkana Divisions and the east-north-south divisions included Mirpur Khas and Sukkur divisions. The researcher selected cluster one through a simple random sampling technique. The researcher took deep consideration while setting out the clusters that there would be an equal distribution of the total population. In the same way, the central cluster had a proportional population size with the rest of the two clusters. It has a population of 725 out of 2026. In the second stage, the researcher adopted a convenient sampling technique to select a sample from that cluster for data collection. the researcher got help from the trained data collection assistants in the Hyderabad Division, whereas in the Shaheed Benazirabad division, the researcher himself visited the sample. The data was collected during working hours of the schools with prior intimation to the sample. The sample adequacy was ensured through Solven’s 1960 formula for the determination of a sample from a finite population. For further authenticity, KMO and Bartlett's Test was also applied and the sample was found adequate at 74.2 percent.

Population and Sample

Table showing population (Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad divisions’ schools and their headteachers).

Sr. No	Institutions	Male	Female	Mix	Total
1	Secondary	138	138	326	602
2	Higher Secondary	25	32	66	123
	Total	163	170	392	725

Table showing sample for current research study.

Sr. No	Institutions	Total	Male	Female	Mix	Remarks
1	Secondary	216	49	49	118	36%
2	Higher Secondary	44	9	12	23	36%
	Total	260	58	61	141	36%

RESULTS

Table showing KMO and Bartlett's Test results.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.742
Approx. Chi-Square	5886.525

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	435
	Sig.	.000

A self-designed questionnaire on a Likert scale (five points) was administered for primary data collection. The reliability of the research instrument was ensured through SPSS, V 22. The following table shows the reliability figures.

Table showing reliability statistics.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.821	23

The collected data was analyzed in frequency, percent, mean score, and standard deviation. The results are shown in tables and graphs. For data analysis, SPSS, V. 22 software was used to get the frequency, percent, mean score, and standard deviations. Whereas graphs were drawn from MS Office 2013. The SPSS-drawn tables, later on, were merged into one table made by the researcher to bring all results in one table given below. Whereas some tables drawn from SPSS were left as it is.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Showing item-wise statistics.

Statement	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	DN	Mea	Std.
	A					R	n	Dev.
<i>Being visionary.</i>	2.8	0	10	180	68	0	4.2	.575
	%	0%	3.8%	69.2%	26.2%	0%		
<i>Understanding of the theory and practices of contemporary leadership.</i>	0	0	8	174	78	0	4.27	.509
	0%	0%	3.1%	66.9%	30%	0%		
<i>Emotional intelligence and resilience, empathy.</i>	0	0	4	155	100	1	4.37	.515
	0%	0%	1.5%	59.6%	38.5%	.4%		
<i>Fair treatment by recognizing students' cultural context.</i>	0	0	2	159	99	0	4.37	.50
	0%	0%	.8%	61.2%	38.1%	0%		
<i>Implement curriculum, instruction, and</i>	0	0	8	147	105	0	4.37	.545
	0%	0%	3.1%	56.5%	40.4%			

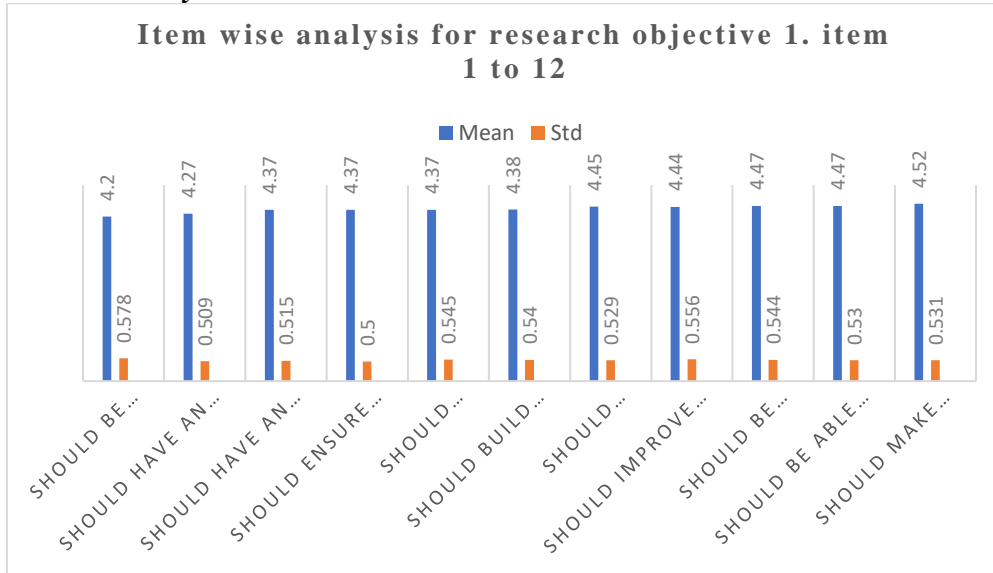
<i>assessment.</i>								
<i>Retain a harmless, caring, and healthy school environment.</i>	0	0	7 2.7%	144 55.4%	104 40%	0	4.38	.54
<i>Retain effective and caring teachers and other staff</i>	0	0	4 1.5%	134 51.5%	120 46.2%	2 .8%	4.45	.529
<i>Workplace conditions, empower and entrust staff.</i>	0	0	8 3.1	129 49.6%	122 46.9%	1 .4%	4.44	.556
<i>Available, reachable, and welcoming.</i>	0	0	6 2.3%	126 48.5%	128 49.2%	0	4.47	.544
<i>Institute, manage, and monitor administrative systems.</i>	0	0	4 1.5%	129 49.6%	124 47.7%	3 1.2%	4.47	.53
<i>Lead the school more effectively.</i>	0	0	4 1.5%	117 45%	138 53.1%	1 .4%	4.52	.531
<i>Commitment to the school's vision mission, and values.</i>	0	3 1.2%	2 .8%	115 44.2%	140 53.8%	0	4.51	.58
<i>Knowledge, understanding, application of practice of leadership theories.</i>	0	11 4.2	37 14.2%	106 40.8%	104 40%	2 .8%	4.17	.83
<i>Workplace ethics and values.</i>	0	0	4 1.5%	109 41.9%	144 55.4%	3 1.2%	4.54	.529
<i>Equity and cultural responsiveness</i>	0	2 .8%	3 1.2%	109 41.9%	144 55.4%	2 .8%	4.53	.566
<i>Implementation of Curricula, instruction, and assessment</i>	0	2 .8%	16 6.2%	105 40.4%	137 52.7%	0	4.45	.647
<i>Evaluation, and development of staff Quality</i>	0	0	0	119 45.8%	141 54.2%	0	4.54	.499

<i>Community care and student support</i>	0	0	2	103	155	0	4.59	.508
			.8%	39.6%	59.6%			
<i>Development of a professional community.</i>	0	0	3	104	153	0	4.58	.518
			1.2%	40%	58.8%			
<i>Meaningful engagement of families and community.</i>	0	0	4	99	157	0	4.59	.523
			1.5%	38.1%	60.4%			
<i>Operations and management such as administrative systems</i>	0	2	2	109	145	2	4.54	.558
	0%	.8%	.8%	41.9%	55.8%	.8%		
<i>Incorporation of feedback from all stakeholders.</i>	0	0	2	120	138	0	4.52	.516
	0%	0%	.8%	46.2%	53.1%	0%		
<i>Monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance</i>	0	0	0	113	147	0	4.57	.497
	0%	0%	0%	43.5%	56.5%	0%		

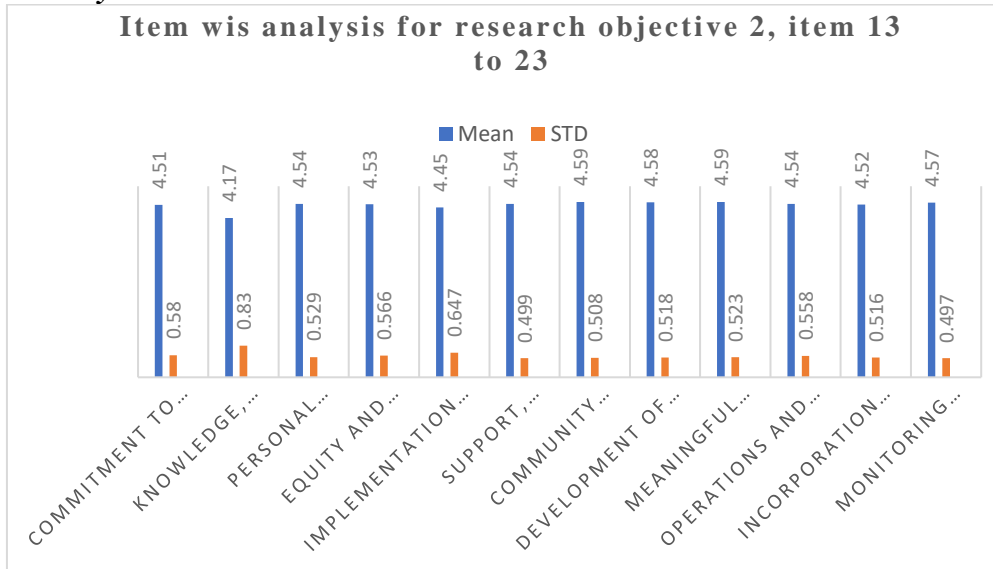
Table 2: Showing results regarding research questions 1, and 2 and consolidated.

S. No	SDA	DA	UD	A	SA	DNR	Mean	Std. Dev.
RQ 1, Understanding of international standards	Fr=2 .07%	Fr= 0 0%	Fr=65 2.27%	Fr=15 94 55.73%	Fr+118 6 41.47%	Fr=13 .46%	4.39	.534
RQ 2, Practicability of international standards	Fr=0 0%	Fr=20 .64%	Fr=75 2.40%	Fr=13 11 42.02%	Fr=170 5 54.65%	Fr=9 .29%	4.51	.564
Consolidated	Fr=2 .04%	Fr=20 .32%	Fr=140 2.34%	Fr=29 05 48.88%	Fr=289 1 48.06	Fr=22 .38%	4.45	.549

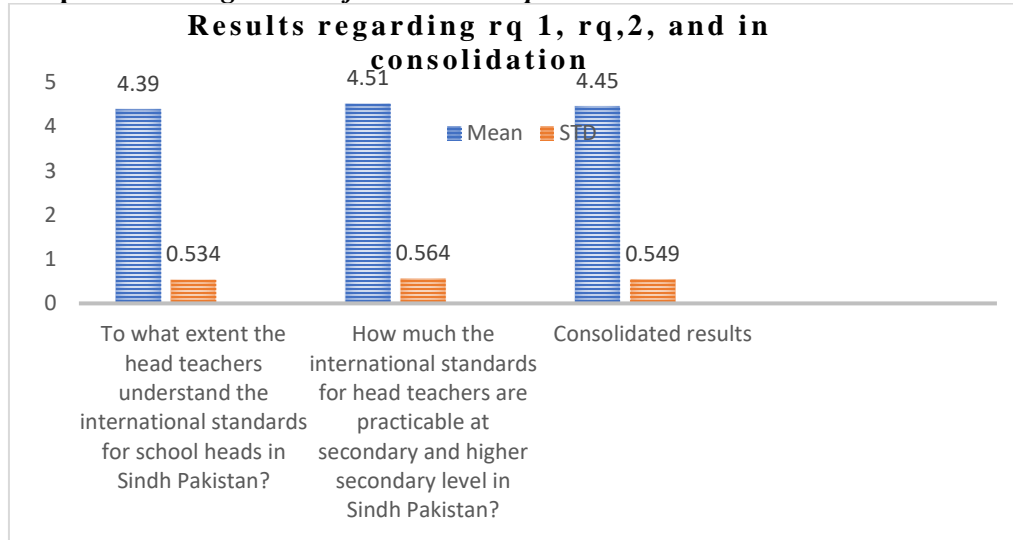
Graph 1: Showing results for the understanding of international standards for school heads by the headteachers.



Graph 2. Showing results for the Practicality of International standards for school heads by the head teachers.



Graph 3: Showing results of the research question and consolidated results



The above results shown in the tables followed by graphs describe and demonstrate research questions one, two, and consolidated results. Research question one was about “To what extent do the head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools understand the international standards in Shaheed Benazir Abad & Hyderabad Divisions? Such as, a headteacher need to be visionary and have a vision and mission statement of his/her school to fulfill the requirements of the community, need to have an understanding of theory and practice of contemporary leadership and need to be able to apply that knowledge for school improvement, have an understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience, and personal wellbeing in the leadership and management of the school and community, to ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and equally by recognizing their cultural context, be able to implement curriculum, instruction, and assessment that is aligned with and promotes school mission, vision and core values, build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student in the school, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into educationally effective faculty and staff, improve workplace conditions, empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility and establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment with the shared school vision, mission, and core values, need to be approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community and ensure presence in the community for productive relationships to promote school vision, mission, and core values, need to be able to institute, manage, and monitor

operations and administrative systems that promote school vision, mission, and core values and should make school more effective for each student, teacher, staff, family, and community, for school heads in Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad Divisions. The majority of the respondents were skewed towards the strongly agreed to have a mean score above 4.00 to 4.52 with a standard deviation close to 0.5. These responses suggest that headteachers were aware and knew the above standards and deemed fit. Furthermore, one headteacher needs to possess all the above standards. The mean score in consolidation, for all statements, remained at 4.39 with a standard deviation of 0.534.

The result regarding research question two that “How much the international standards for head teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools are practicable in Shaheed Benazir Abad & Hyderabad Divisions? Such as it was practicable that a headteacher could be committed with vision, mission, and core values of the school, knowledge, understanding, and application of practice and theories of contemporary leadership, having personal qualities such as social, interpersonal skills, ethics, and professional values, equity and cultural responsiveness, implementation of curriculum, methods of instruction, and assessment implementations, support, evaluation, and development of teachers and staff quality, community care and student support, development of professional community for teachers and staff, meaningful engagement of families and community in the schools, operations and management such as administrative systems, incorporation of feedback from all stakeholders including students, teachers, staff, and community for continuous school improvement and monitoring and evaluation of teachers’ performance were practicable at secondary and higher secondary level in Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad divisions of province of Sindh, Pakistan. The majority of the respondents were well diverted towards the strongly agreed to have a mean score from 4.17 to 4.59, with a standard deviation of 0.497 to 0.83. As a whole, the mean score remained at 4.51 with a standard deviation of 0.564.

The consolidated results regarding the understanding and practicability of international school leadership standards, the majority of the respondents were well skewed towards the strongly agreed to have a mean score of 4.45, with a standard deviation of 0.549. This showed that the headteachers of the Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad divisions were well aware of international standards for schools and believed that those standards were practicable in the above two divisions of the province of Sindh, Pakistan.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research statement which was about the understanding and practicability of international standards by the head teachers of high and higher

secondary schools of Divisions of Shaheed Benazir Abad & Hyderabad. It was found that the understanding and awareness of leadership performance standards in the subsequent areas such as to a headteacher need to be visionary and have a vision and mission statement of his/her school to fulfill the requirements of the community (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016), have an understanding of theory and practice of modern-day school leadership and be able to practice that knowledge for school improvement, have an understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience, and personal wellbeing in the leadership and management of the school and community (Tai & Kareem, 2018), to ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and equally by recognizing their cultural context (Nesterova & Jackson, 2016) to implement curriculum, instruction, and assessment that is aligned with and promotes school mission, vision and core values, build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student in the school (Stronge & Xu, 2021) to support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into educationally effective faculty and staff (Gu, 2014) to improve workplace conditions, empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility and establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to the shared school vision, mission, and core values (Task, 2018) be approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community and ensure presence in the community for productive relationships to promote the school vision, mission, and core values (Tschannen-Moran & Christopher, 2015) to be able to institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote school vision, mission, and core values and should make school more effective for each student, teacher, staff, family, and community, the headteachers had narrated that they were well aware and understood as well about above indicators/ standards (Gu, 2014). This infers that the headteachers are motivated to endeavor to improve the quality of education in their schools of Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad. This basic research was related to the insights of headteachers of secondary and higher secondary schools of Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad Division regarding the understanding and practicality of international school leadership standards. Based on the findings of the research paper, it was concluded that the responses of the headteachers of Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad divisions showed that they had had a greater understanding of international standards being implemented in America, Australia, and OECD countries and also showed greater agreement that those international standards are applicable and practicable in the schools of Shaheed Benazir Abad and Hyderabad Divisions of Sindh, Pakistan.

The mono-research method was the major limitation of the study. The generalization of the study other than two divisions, namely, Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad

divisions of Sindh, Pakistan is one of the foremost limitations of the current research study. This study was further delimited to the two divisions of the province of Sindh, Pakistan. The other delimitations of the study included sampling techniques because of the COVID-19 situation. SPSS-drawn tables were converted into researchers' redeveloped tables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study recommended that headteachers might be encouraged to practice international standards in their schools. As the headteachers of the schools are aware of the international standards make endeavors to their best to practice them in their schools.

It was also recommended that necessary policy measures need to be taken to make headteachers much more clear about international standards and standards like the above or otherwise, those which can best fit in the context of province Sindh and its all six divisions. Implementation through policy measures is made sure. It is also recommended that short-term pieces of training for the headteachers need to be designed wherein such international standards need to be the part of training manual so that they can deliver their best to improve and impart quality education to the students in their schools.

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