

Perceptions of Effective Leadership in Bangladesh Secondary Schools:

Moving towards Distributed Leadership?

By

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Abstract

Studies on school leadership show that effective leadership is basic to successful school development and improvement of teaching and learning. Secondary schools in Bangladesh depend on principals as their leaders. Since Bangladesh is now facing the challenge of reforms in secondary education, principals need to acquire current knowledge of leadership theory and research to give them the theoretical understandings of leadership approaches that are likely to make their schools more successful. The purpose of this study was to explore how principals of Bangladesh understand leadership theory and the extent to which they use the distributed leadership approach. It also investigated their leadership practice in their school contexts, including how they engage their teachers in leadership activities.

The participants in this study were the principals and twenty teachers from four secondary schools in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. The schools were selected from ten upper ranked schools of Dhaka city based on the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination in the academic year 2009-2010. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principals and a survey was completed by the teachers. The findings show that the principals have adequate experiential knowledge for leading their schools; most of their leadership skills have been developed through experience and are focussed on pedagogical leadership. However, they lack theoretical knowledge of different approaches and concepts of school leadership, as they have not had opportunities for formal leadership training programmes. The survey result indicates that there is some practice of distributed leadership in the schools.

The findings of this study have implications for the development of secondary school leadership in Bangladesh. They suggest that professional leadership programmes should be provided for principals of secondary schools and principals should have increased self-management in the administration of their schools. Teachers are keen to broaden their participation in leadership activities. The recommendations from this study could lead to more effective leadership in Bangladeshi secondary schools.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The roles and responsibilities of school leaders are changing frequently due to a wave of reforms which cause leaders to face continuous challenges in their jobs. As there are ambiguities about the activities which may actually be considered leadership, it is difficult to sketch the boundaries of leaders' work (Mayrowetz, 2008). Depending on the school situation and personal characteristics, leaders may work alone or collaboratively to reach their goals. Heroic forms of leadership, where leaders work mainly alone, tend not to use the leadership capabilities and aptitudes of others (Duignan, 2006; Riley & MacBeath, 2005). This type of leadership does not draw on the leadership capacity of teachers. Duignan (2006) voices a concern, "Many educational leaders leave themselves isolated and alone, taking primary responsibility for the leadership of their school. This constitutes a very narrow view of leadership and ignores the leadership talents of teachers, students and other community stakeholders" (p. 105).

In many developing countries, the schools demonstrate the heroic type of leadership without considering and utilising potential talents and expertise of their teachers. In most schools in Bangladesh, leadership is seen as positional leadership; the leadership style is based on the authority and power given by the position of principal (Salahuddin, 2010). Principals are accountable to the authorities and to school communities by virtue of their position, with little consideration of the capabilities of other staff in the school. It is time to consider

changes in school leadership styles which may break the isolation of traditional positional leadership by utilising the capabilities of all in the schools.

In developed countries the era of positional leadership is over and school leaders are expected to work effectively within and outside the school context for successful outcomes and are accountable for both. A culture of sharing of energy, commitment and contribution of all who work in schools is needed for them to be successful. As schools are complex social organisations, leaders have to depend on collaborative work with their teachers to meet the challenges of reform and change. It is beyond the capacity of school leaders to manage all things and this requires a distribution of power to engage teachers' expertise to create cultures that enhance development of teaching, learning and leadership (Elmore, 2000a). Distribution of power can be considered as an important element of effective leadership, and distributing power may enhance a culture in schools which fosters development of teaching, learning and leadership.

Bush (2008) emphasises that “effective leadership is fundamental to successful schools and education systems” (p. 9). Studies on school leadership show that effective school leadership is basic to successful organisational development and enhancement of teaching and learning (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003). The form that school leadership takes depends on the situation and context of the school. Distributed leadership has emerged as a leadership approach that produces successful school performance in various contexts. Harris (2002) identifies distributed leadership as a factor in the success of leaders in challenging contexts depending on particular situation of particular schools. As Bangladesh faces the challenge of

reformation of the secondary education sector, it could consider distributed leadership as a means to achieve effective leadership in secondary schools.

Though distributed leadership is a hot topic in the educational leadership literature, it remains unclear, lacking a coherent conceptual base (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006). Distributed leadership acknowledges an understanding of leadership activities broader than just those carried out by school principals. A distributed leadership perspective frames educational leadership practice as interaction among leaders, followers and situations (Spillane, 2006). It focuses on the interrelations of people and their situation through a lens where the individuals' knowledge and skills are taken into account. Distributed leadership practices in schools aim to enhance teaching and learning by building the capacity of teachers and engaging students more deeply in their learning. Duignan (2006) posits that distributed leadership has a clear purpose of whole school improvement; an important motivator and contributor to quality teaching and learning in the classrooms. Through this type of leadership perspective, school leaders try to build a culture that engages every teacher and student in the school in learning.

Schools have become reliant on the leadership of principals and other members of a school for continuous improvement and are being asked to be more accountable for the education of students through effective leadership of school principals and teachers (Ferrandino, 2001). Schools are trying to provide more effective learning communities by engaging teachers in leadership activities and professional learning. For principals to become effective leaders by utilising a more distributed style of leadership, they need to have knowledge of school

leadership theory and research on how schools become successful. Research suggests that many principals lack the understanding to carry out their role successfully (Williams, 2006). This study investigates principals' perceptions of leadership and explores the distribution of leadership responsibilities that operates in some Bangladesh secondary schools.

Overview of secondary school leadership in Bangladesh

Education in Bangladesh is divided into three major stages: primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education is five years, secondary education is seven years with three sub-stages: three years of junior secondary, two years of secondary and two years of higher secondary (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics [BANBEIS], 2010). Though there are three major streams in secondary education in Bangladesh: general, technical/vocational and madrasah (Islamic Religion based education) education; only the general education stream has been considered as secondary education for this study.

In terms of administration and finance, there are two types of secondary schools: public and private. The public schools fully run by government; number only 317 in the whole country. The majority of schools are run privately, but receive 100% government financial assistance for salary and wages. Physical facilities, infrastructure development, educational equipments and teaching aids are also supplied by the government. The secondary schools generally provide co-education though a minority offer single sex education.

School administration in Bangladesh is shaped by the top-down traditions of the prevailing colonial system (Thornton, 2006). "The Ministry of Education is concerned with policy

formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the post-primary education sector" (BANBEIS, 2007). In the administration of secondary education, the Ministry of Education is the highest authority and the principal is the authority for school management. In every school, there is an Academic Council (AC) to assist principals in decision-making regarding academic improvement. All the teachers of a school are members of the AC so it equivalent to a staff meeting. The participants in this committee set and implement disciplinary decisions and solve academic issues such as allocating teachers to classes. In addition, there is the School Managing Committee (SMC) for secondary schools and a governing body (GB) for higher secondary schools (Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka, 2011). These committees represent teachers, community members, parents, educators and the government (ibid). SMC and GB play semi-executive roles in recruiting teachers, setting school fees, establishing advisory positions for different tasks and overall supervision of schools.

In Bangladesh, there are two key leadership positions in every secondary school. Principals have the power to lead the school formally and assistant principals assist the principals in executing rules and regulations (BANBEIS, 2010). These two positions hold formal leadership and management roles, and are responsible for the development and improvement of the schools. Salahuddin (2010) indicates that though principals are accountable for the school improvement because of their administrative position, many appear not to focus on being effective in their leadership. Principals are leaders in different ways; Gronn (2003) states, "Principals and other school administrators may be leaders, therefore, but they are not automatically so by virtue of being administrators and managers" (p. 17). To make their

schools more effective principals need to acquire current knowledge of leadership theory and research to engage teachers more in leadership activities. This is a challenging issue for improving principals and school leadership in Bangladesh.

Due to stress from extreme workloads and insufficient salary, principals are always busy with their routine administration work and having to find extra sources of income for the schools rather than thinking about their own professional development. The opportunity for organisational learning is hampered by overstress (Cardno, 2002). Teams in schools should be fostered by visionary leaders building the organisational climate, rather than engaging in defensive communication (ibid). It is important for visionary leaders to identify the goals of their schools and to link them with teachers' professional development. Leaders need to engage many teachers in various responsibilities and activities, thereby creating the prospect for the teachers to be future leaders. This seldom happens in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Salahuddin (2010) notes that some experienced school leaders in urban areas distribute their leadership among different levels of teachers but most of the rural schools do not practise such methods. Distribution of leadership could reduce the job stress of leaders, if the teachers are skilled enough to take on the tasks.

In Bangladesh school quality and success is measured by student achievement in public examinations. Teachers' remuneration and school facilities constrain principals trying to improve student learning achievement in the schools (Thornton, 2006). Most of the principals have to work in the challenging contexts of high teacher-student ratio, poor physical facilities and a negative economy and socio-political environment. Rahman, Hamzah, Meerah &

Rahman (2010) note that secondary schools in Bangladesh face the problem of inadequate physical facilities, lack qualified teachers and need more competent educational administrators. Teachers have little involvement in decision making related to development of their schools. As a result, they feel undervalued as they are excluded from the decision-making process about school development.

The traditional hierarchy of leadership in schools expects power in the top position to be that of the principal. The Bangladesh government has now changed focus on secondary education from 'quantity' to 'quality' where improvement initiatives are being implemented for School Managing Committee (SMC) and benefits for teachers and curriculum development (Rahman et al., 2010). To date there has been no leadership training programme provided for principals. Recently, the Bangladesh government has taken an initiative to develop and deliver leadership training for the principals in secondary schools through Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) funded by ADB, CIDA and Government of Bangladesh (TQI, 2011) which is a step in the right direction. If the government is able to implement an effective leadership programme for principals, secondary education will reach its new goals in time.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to contribute to knowledge about the perceptions of secondary school leadership in Bangladesh. It aims to explore how principals in Bangladesh understand and practise school leadership. To investigate how principals achieve successful outcomes for their schools, it is important to ask how they understand leadership and what it means to

them in practice, including their practice of distribution of leadership responsibilities and activities. Another purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which principals use distributed leadership. The study investigates what their leadership practice looks like in school contexts and how principals engage other teachers in leadership activities. This discussion includes description of opportunities principals provide and identification of the conditions which enable leadership opportunities to happen. Qualitative as well as quantitative data was collected to explore leadership practices and how these practices have impact on the success of the schools.

Research questions

This study endeavours to explore a void in the theory and practice of secondary school leadership in Bangladesh secondary education. Some secondary school principals' views and practices are discussed to gain insight into current school leadership in Bangladesh. Distributed leadership is examined in this study to explore the extent to which principals are using this contemporary leadership approach. The following three research questions drive this study:

1. How do principals interpret and practise school leadership in Bangladesh?
2. What do principals think contributes to effective leadership in secondary schools in Bangladesh?
3. What elements of distributed leadership are used in secondary schools of Bangladesh?

Significance of the study

As an Assistant Professor of an educational institution for higher education in Bangladesh, I teach various courses in educational leadership at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. I also teach at the Executive Master of Education level for the professionals (principals, teachers, education administrators) in the education sector and those who want to be teachers. I lead them through the teaching and learning process to gain theoretical knowledge of school leadership.

I was involved in a school leadership project run by British Council, Bangladesh, where I developed and delivered leadership training for principals of secondary schools. The leadership project allowed me to think deeply about perspectives on school leadership in Bangladesh. Before and after the training programme, I visited some participant schools to observe their leadership activities where I acquired first-hand experiences of secondary school leadership and was encouraged to conduct a study on school leadership. However, I have not had the opportunity to work alongside the principals of secondary schools in Bangladesh to gain insight into a breadth of views on leadership and leadership practices. For this reason I wanted to discover how principals of Bangladesh understand and practise leadership in their schools and how they distribute leadership activities among teachers, presumably with the aim of making their schools more effective. Given the lack of study on school leadership in Bangladesh, the findings of this study may be used by me and aspiring principals to help define our understandings of leadership and how to implement that to improve schools.

Organisation of chapters

This study has been organised into five chapters. Chapter One is preceded by an abstract of the study and contains an introduction to the research, purposes of the research, research questions and statement of the research's potential significance. The literature review in Chapter Two discusses a theoretical model for leadership, effective leadership, the emergent view and dimensions of distributed leadership, the impact of leadership on school culture, concepts and practice of teacher leadership in school development and learning communities in schools. Chapter Three is an overview of the methodology chosen, reasons for choosing it and details of the methods, participants and settings, description of semi-structured interviews, points of access, instrumentation, conduct of questionnaire, data analysis procedures, ethical issues and limitations of the study. The results of the qualitative data are discussed in Chapter Four. Descriptive analysis of survey data has also been presented there. Finally, Chapter Five is the discussion of the findings, implications for practice and recommendations for further research. Potential challenges and enablers have also been identified in this chapter. In the chapter five, the findings of this study lead to recommendations to improve secondary school leadership in Bangladesh and identify areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of existing literature related to leadership in schools, the practice of distributed leadership and its role in school improvement. Overall, this thesis focuses on the interpretation and practice of school leadership by four secondary school principals in Bangladesh. This review of literature examines the development of educational leadership, the dimensions of distributed leadership and the scope and impact of teacher leadership in schools.

Leadership defined

Leadership is a complex term which is frequently used in discussion in many organisations. This term has been defined in different ways by many researchers. Describing leadership as a social interactive process, Cammock (2001) says that, "Leadership is a holistic process that involves leaders and followers interacting in particular social contexts" (p. 27). Similarly, Northouse (2007) identifies leadership as a process by which a person influences a group of individuals to reach a common goal. Leadership is an integrated process where leaders intermingle with followers in a social context. Basically, leadership is a social process by which a person persuades the followers to achieve specific goals by motivating, guiding and leading them within a social context.

Leadership naturally takes place in a group context where a leader exercises influence on followers to carry out some task, motivating them through development of a mission, vision and goals. Spillane (2006) explains educational leadership as the way to influence the enthusiasm, knowledge, affect or practices of other members of schools or the way they understand the practice of influence. Similarly, Elmore (2000b) defines leadership in education as focusing the leader's role on guidance and improvement of instruction. He comments that leadership is a process that can be learned and is also related to inherent traits.

For the purpose of my study, leadership is defined as a process of principals influencing teachers toward the development of their knowledge, instructional practice and leadership qualities (Elmore, 2000b; Northouse, 2007). Leaders influence followers to improve their skills to reach the goals of schools, a complicated task. There is continuous need for competent and creative leaders at every level in every society.

Foster (2004) investigated the impact of leadership on school improvement. She explores how the concepts and practices of leadership are understood in relation to school improvement. She finds a relationship between leadership and school improvement in her study. For her research, case study method was used; primary data was collected from principals, teachers, students and parents in two secondary schools in Western Canada. Foster analysed the findings to identify implications for policy, practice and research into the interface between leadership and school improvement. The schools were selected purposively, based on school improvement initiatives across several years and the positive

reputation gained by the schools among the community. Individual interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation and documents were used to collect data.

Foster found that the schools set an example of effective inter-relationships among educators, pupils and parents. The schools run advocacy meetings and leadership team meetings; they also hold education planning committees and cohort group meetings where all the students and teachers work towards a common purpose of school improvement. The research shows that this school leadership is focused on learning and functionally distributed among teachers rather than limited to those in designated leadership positions. Diverse leadership activities gear up the school improvement process. Teacher collaboration and on-going professional learning are essential to sustain the improvements. Teacher leadership is as important as principal leadership. Students and parents play a vital role in goal-setting and decision-making for the schools even though they are excluded from formal leadership. Foster suggests that school improvement may be served better by the overall leadership of principal, teachers, students and community. Leadership for school improvement could be defined as a shared social influence process.

In 2003, Lumby examined the leadership perspectives at colleges in England. Lumby's study explores the direct and indirect impact of national policy on college leadership and to what extent internal factors shape the leadership forms in colleges. She used questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews as the methods. Two types of colleges that had the same policy and funding imperatives were the focus of this study. This study was the outcome of two different projects. The respondents were asked about contexts that change such as student population,

external pressure and ways of managing change. Lumby triangulated data using the responses collected through the questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews. Though the focus of each project was different, in both cases the large quantity of data on management and leadership was analysed from perspectives of college leadership. The author suggested that government policy conceptualised leadership as individual work rather than as collaborative ways of working in an organisation. She concluded that leadership does not mean management delegation; it is created in a mutual way. Lumby suggested further examination is need of the impact of factors such as school size and curriculum breadth to build a holistic leadership model for school success.

Effective leadership

Schools are increasingly under public scrutiny and principals are becoming more accountable to expectations of school improvement. As William-Boyd (2002) explains, "educational leadership cannot be separated from the socio political, cultural, historical, or ideological environments in which it exists, . . ." (p. 4). Now school leaders are facing the challenge of educating a growing diversity of students; of being responsive to the needs of students and society; and are accountable for effective teaching and learning processes. Effective school leaders are able to utilise the skills of all in the schools to reach school goals within a minimal time. Riley and MacBeath (2003) describe effective leaders as follows: "Good school leaders are those who are able to maximise the diverse leadership qualities of others, enabling them to take on leadership within their areas of expertise. They lead by managing, motivating and inspiring people" (p. 181). School principals are being effective when they are visionary and clear about their mission. Such principals can achieve school success by motivating teachers

and creating a collaborative community in schools. If schools lack effective leadership, seldom they can reach their own articulated goals.

Lack of effective leadership is a vital issue in education. Leadership must include positional leaders but it should also stimulate and comprise the leadership activities of others. Cammock (2001) explains that, "While there is unquestionably a need for more skilled and soulful public leadership there is an even more critical need for people to take leadership responsibility within their own lives" (p. 28). Bangladesh, where educational leadership is not considered as a specific field in the operation of education systems, faces the challenge of building school leadership. Harris' (2002) study examines the essentials of effective leadership in schools facing challenging contexts in terms of achievement rates in public examination and socio-economic status. This study explains that to be successful a range of leadership styles is needed; no one style is perfect for all situations. She argues that most of the research in schools that are challenging in terms of their social contexts, deals with the difficulties rather than leadership practices. Her research design incorporates multiple methods such as semi-structured interviews with principals, senior management and teachers, and documentary and contextual data. Ten schools were selected for the study from various challenging circumstances with regard to socio-economic and cultural situations and school performance.

Harris found that the success of a leader in challenging contexts varies depending on the particular situation and context of the school. Factors affecting success include the school's vision and values, distributing leadership, investing in staff development, developing and maintaining relationships, and community building. All the principals worked to empower

students, staff and parents to play a part in leadership. They imply that successful leaders are people-centred and give importance to human needs rather than to organisational needs according to personal and professional values. They also distribute their leadership to other teachers. They extend the boundaries of participatory leadership and are able to combine a moral purpose with a willingness to promote collaboration amongst colleagues through investing in teacher development. This study suggests that school leadership is a collective endeavour which succeeds by involving all teachers in leadership and tapping their skills. Under different challenging circumstances, leaders could be successful by building the community of the school through developing relationships and involving others, and providing best opportunities for teaching and learning. Harris believes that success cannot be achieved by the heroic leadership practices of a single principal alone.

The Best Evidence Synthesis on leadership by Robinson, Hohepa and Llyod (2009) provides a rich framework for principal leadership and transition of school leadership from the heroic to pedagogical approach to suit various New Zealand contexts. In this report, the authors define leadership as, “leadership that causes others to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students” (p. 70) which indicates pedagogical leadership in schools. Pedagogical leadership entails in-depth knowledge and support of teaching and learning. Pedagogical leaders work with others to develop and improve student learning in schools (Robinson et al., 2009). These leaders are very much involved in the process of instructional improvement. The progress of schools is measured by improvement of achievement of students through effective classroom teaching strategies. Decisions in schools regarding goals, curriculum, budgeting and property are made taking into consideration how they could

positively impact on teaching and learning. Pedagogical leaders can effectively create the environment for improvement of teaching and learning and build capacity of teachers to focus on classroom teaching and learning, in collaborative ways, which in turn enhance school success (Bush, 2008; Southworth, 2004).

Effective leadership is developed through collaborative professional learning and aims at purposeful change in schools. All teachers have potential to contribute to leadership for school improvement, but need scope for engaging themselves. The positional leader is designated to develop organisational procedures; build the cultural climate; and provide support for all teachers to be able to contribute their knowledge and skills to leadership which helps to build leadership capacity (Hopkins & Jackson, 2003). This concept of leadership puts school leaders in a position where their leadership roles become more fluid and distributed than any other forms of leadership.

Distributed leadership

Transforming schools is such an enormous task that principals should not be expected to do all the work alone even if they are outstanding leaders. The larger the school the more complex management becomes, so there is the need to distribute leadership tasks among others. It has been evident in research that leadership should be distributed throughout the teachers rather than concentrated in one position for the improvement of the school (Copland, 2003; Elmore, 2000a; Lashway, 2003). In some countries school leadership is seen as formal roles based on authority or power, and people in those roles are considered responsible for the development and improvement of the school. Harris (2008) suggests use

of distributed leadership in such schools for two reasons, “firstly, it has the potential to free schools from the current rigidity inflexibility of existing leadership structures and secondly, it has the potential to connect the practice of leadership more closely to teaching and learning” (p. 29). She argued that the roles of different patterns of distributed leadership in school improvement have been significantly evident in several research studies.

Historically Gronn and Elmore have developed the theoretical framework of distributed leadership. Both researchers have led the present theoretical debates on distributed leadership (Harris, 2005). Gronn (2000) identifies three major actions in distributed leadership: collaboration, intuitive working relations and institutionalised practices. According to Gronn, spontaneous collaboration takes place when interaction is not allocated and two or more individuals utilise their expertise to solve a problem. He notes that intuitive working relations occur in a certain time when two or more members depend a lot on each other to solve a problem or achieve tasks. Institutional practices are defined as the role assignments of the formal positions in an organisation. Gronn believes that school leaders tend to share their leadership in these specific patterns. Elmore (2000b) advances the Gronn model by linking it to instructional improvement and school achievement, employing multiple sources of leadership and utilising individual skills. He defined distributed leadership in broader aspects in schools. He suggests for school achievement that the complex nature of instructional practice requires exercise of shared and complementary expertise rather than the hierarchical division of knowledge. Indeed, distributed leadership is developed through the use of dissimilar areas of expertise to achieve the common goals of schools.

Both Gronn and Elmore think that individual expertise and knowledge are utilised in solving school problems and completing different tasks. Gronn and Elmore recommend distributed leadership dimensions which include school organisation, shared responsibility and principal leadership. My study discusses these four dimensions of distributed leadership: mission, vision and goals; school culture; shared responsibility and leadership practices. Many research studies identify the importance of setting the mission, vision and goals of a school and the impact of this on school achievement (MacBeath, 2005; Neuman & Simons, 2000). School mission drives the aim for success of schools which is based on the expectations of community members. It is evident in MacBeath's (2005) study that the schools which are more developed in terms of teaching and learning are those that have clear mission, vision and goals. Without a specific mission and vision, principals seldom understand how what they are doing might enhance the improvement of the school. The development of schools can progress rapidly if they have a clear mission, vision and goals; and stakeholders are conscious about successful and effective implementation of these.

School culture is another important dimension of distributed leadership identified by Elmore (2000b). School culture creates the opportunities to involve teachers in leadership and to make a collaborative environment for teaching and learning to flourish. Supporting this, Cotton suggests that the collaborative endeavour between school and community develops a healthy school culture for school development (as cited in Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In 2005, Gordon examined the impact of the dimensions of distributed leadership on school performance and student achievement. Data was collected from 1,257 teachers of 36 Connecticut schools where 26 elementary and 10 secondary schools were selected. The

Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) was utilised to gather survey responses from teachers. The data was analysed in two stages: factor analysis and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). Construct validity was determined through factor analysis to ensure the relationship of the survey items. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients derived through use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) ranged from .84 to .92. Among the dimensions of distributed leadership, the results indicated that only one dimension, school culture, could predict student achievement to a statistically significant degree. The other dimensions contributed to school performance collectively but were not individually significant. The limitation of the study was stated as being that the variance of the covariates generates a barrier to inferring the other dimensions' performance predictors.

Shared responsibility is an important dimension of distributed leadership. Teachers are motivated when they think they are part of the school administration and have involvement in the decision-making of the school. Duignan (2006) advocates for sharing the responsibility in decision-making since it helps to create a greater ownership of decisions by teachers. A study by Devos and Hulpia (2010) explores the nature of distributed leadership and how its practice might relate to school improvement through teachers' organisational commitment. Their research is a follow-up study of a larger project on school members' commitment to the schools. Four schools were selected purposively based on high and low potentiality in school performance. The interview questions focused on different dimensions and characteristics of distributed leadership and organisational commitment. In the findings, the authors imply that it is important for principals to stimulate teachers to participate in school decision-making process actively to help make their schools successful.

Leadership practice refers to the exercise of leadership by principals in guiding, motivating and supporting others in leadership responsibilities in schools. It is an important dimension of distributed leadership that is carried out with the collaboration of others in leading process. Sheppard (2003) suggested that, leadership practice should be distributed to formal and informal leaders for school success. Principals can play the role in distributing leadership tasks to teachers and engaging them actively in school leadership. A study by Mascall, Leithwood, Straus and Sacks (2008) examines the relationship between the patterns of distributed leadership and teachers' academic optimism for effective schools. They hypothesised that teachers' academic optimism would be most strongly and positively associated with the patterns of leadership distribution giving greatest weight to the coordination of leadership efforts. They argued that much current research aims to demonstrate the impact of leaders on schools and students when the challenge was to identify the indirect path and variables through which leadership influences students' achievement. Then they agreed that the degree to which leadership was successful in improving the learning of students would appear to reflect, in part, the amount of influence leadership has on teachers' motivations and related beliefs and feeling.

Data for this study was gathered as a part of a large study on distributed leadership. The study was conducted in one large school district in Ontario, Canada. All licensed teachers (about 8,800) of that district were the sample population for this study. Among them, 1,640 teachers responded to a questionnaire online. They found there was more variation of responses within schools due to differences in teachers' expertise, motivation and willingness to engage in leadership, than across schools. The school context seems less important than

the differences among individuals in all schools. The standard deviations of the responses were fairly high, suggesting that teachers varied widely in their perceptions of the patterns of leadership distribution in their schools. This conception of leadership distribution patterns suggests that more coordinated forms of leadership distribution make more productive contributions to school outcomes.

Teacher leadership

Teacher leadership has emerged as an important factor in enabling future leaders to develop and to distribute leadership tasks among teachers. Though teacher leadership is a familiar term at present, previously principals had poor knowledge and hesitation about this concept (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Even now, many principals in developing countries would think about teacher leadership as the team leader or subject leader. Every teacher has expertise in different fields and without tapping the potential of all teachers, achieving the school goals may be difficult. Teacher leadership now warrants understanding across the education sector. Ackerman and Mackenzie (2007) define teacher leadership as a collective and collaborative endeavour in schools. Teacher leaders develop themselves with the cooperation of their colleagues and value the work of their peers. Stein, Smith and Silver (1999) realise that teachers learn in a social setting in their school context rather than individually. Through their work, they try to influence other teachers to improve them. Formal leadership positions are not essential to develop teacher leadership; and teachers can engage and contribute to leadership tasks from any position.

Developing teacher leadership in traditionally hierarchical schools is complicated. However, principals can create opportunities for the professional development of teacher leaders, which can simplify the task. When teacher leaders engage in professional learning such as improving instruction, mentoring others and planning collaboratively; mostly they are engaged in self learning (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Principals can recognise the work of teacher leaders, motivating them to develop their leadership and helping them realise that they are responsible for their own learning. Since teacher leadership has great importance for school development, teacher leaders have to realise that leadership is not a privilege for them, it is a part of their future work for the success of the school (Du, 2007). For the professional development of teacher leaders, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) suggest a model named 'Leadership Development for Teachers Model' which includes three major components: personal assessment; changing school; and influencing strategies. They explain that the personal assessment invites teachers to explore their own beliefs; changing the schools helps teachers to understand their positions in leading; and influencing others enhances the way of leading others.

Anderson (1992) suggests that the positive culture of schools helps to improve teacher leadership. Schools need to develop a culture of sharing among teachers so that the potential leaders can transfer their knowledge and skills to others and can build a collaborative environment in the school. Coyle (1997) comments that it is rare for school structures to foster teachers to be leaders beyond the classroom and most of them discourage teacher leadership. Teachers are interested in leadership if the school structure encourages them to play leadership roles. Beachum and Dentith (2004) suggest that if teachers have more control

of their tasks and the school structure supports their endeavour in changing schools, they will be motivated to take on leadership roles and tasks.

The study by Scribner, Sawyer, Watson and Myers (2007) investigates how collaborative teacher teams contribute to successful school leadership. The researchers examined the process of distributed leadership in two collaborative teacher teams, addressing three research questions related to teachers' collaboration and distributing leadership activities. The setting of this study is a large comprehensive high school of mixed racial composition in a mid-sized Missouri community. The willingness to participate, a history of using teacher teams since 1986, focus on professional learning community and close connections with the researchers encouraged them to select this school for their study. This study is limited to two teacher teams because of the demands of intensive data collection and analysis that was carried out. Several meetings of each team were observed and recorded on digital video during the course of a 16-week semester.

The data set consisted of observer field notes and digital recordings of the meetings. The researchers transcribed randomly selected sessions in full among the 18 observed meetings. The remaining meetings were reviewed when a unique segment of coding saturation was perceived and transcribed partially in spot. All data were examined repeatedly by the research team and analysed using the coding scheme. Their analysis of the dialogues focused on identifying types of discourse among the team members. This study applied open and axial coding techniques derived from the grounded theory approach which allowed the researchers to go through the constitution of discourse of the teams of teachers. The

researchers conclude that leadership can be distributed to teachers in both social and situational forms which influence and shape one another.

Conclusion

Multiple studies have been conducted to assess principals' leadership style and abilities. Recent research on school leadership demonstrates that leadership style and practices impact on school success (Elmore, 2000a; Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Harris, 2004) and vary due to school contexts. Some literature on school leadership is focused on the effectiveness of distributed leadership where leadership activities are shared among teachers, thereby creating a collaborative culture in schools. It is revealed in the literature that the aim of leadership in successful schools is to engage everyone in the school developing procedure, thereby empowering their capacity to learn and improving the quality of teaching and learning processes. This review points to a new frontier in understanding of leadership concepts and approaches, and developing and fostering leadership process in schools in different contexts, which is the purpose of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEACH DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design used in this study and the reason for the selection of methodology. This study focuses on the perspectives of principals on effective school leadership and their leadership practice in their school contexts. Mixed research methods were used to explore the principals' interpretation of school leadership, their practice of it and their thinking on distributing their leadership responsibilities.

Many reasons can be identified for using mixed research approaches for this study. Using a combination of research methods provides a comprehensive picture of the study phenomenon. Many authors argue that a mixed method approach helps to neutralise the limitations of each approach (Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2008). By using mixed methods, findings from a quantitative study can be followed up and explained by conducting interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the findings obtained. Conversely, a qualitative phase of a study may generate items for inclusion in a questionnaire to be used in a quantitative phase of the study (Bryman, 2007). A mixed-method approach is appropriate for my research purpose, because it can be considered as a 'holistic approach' where a researcher accounts for different perspectives of different people (Creswell, 2008; Lichtman, 2009). Given the benefits of using mixed methods, I have decided to use this approach for my current study.

Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this study, including interviews and survey methods. The interviews were a qualitative method since this research is based on the individual perspectives of four principals, and involved the detailed examination of leadership ideas, place and time (Freebody, 2004; Lichtman, 2006). Following the suggestions of Lichtman (2006), a qualitative approach is appropriate here, because I am interested to explore the particular and descriptive nature of effective school leadership of four principals. Exploring the interpretation of principals in each of their social contexts is suited to qualitative study as it takes into account personal thoughts and social backgrounds related to them (Flick, 2009). Qualitative research places emphasis on qualities of entities and ways of doing things and believes that meanings are constructed through social interactions. In qualitative study, the researcher enters into the world of the subjects under study and gets close to them, earning their trust and recording what the subjects say (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study, I have examined the principals' perception on school leadership collecting detailed and in-depth data through semi-structured interviews.

In addition, I measured the practice of dimensions of distributed leadership in the schools in an objective way. A survey was conducted among twenty teachers which allowed me to understand the extent to which distributed leadership was being practised in the participants' schools. Though no research endeavour is free from value judgements, quantitative research can be considered as an objective process of deduction whereas the qualitative process is subjective and a process of induction that can only be viewed in context (Morgan, 2007).

Interviews for in-depth perceptions of school leadership

In this study, I collected in-depth data from four principals who are considered to be effective school leaders in Bangladesh. To discuss the meaning of effective leadership from the data gathered from the principals, I analysed and interpret it in an inductive way. These characteristics of qualitative data concern people's experiences that cannot be measured in the way that quantitative research demands (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). The qualitative researcher tries to consider events through the participants' eyes and operate his or her research according to the participants' interpretation of the problem (Burns, 2000).

Survey on practice of distributed leadership

In the quantitative part of the study, I designed a questionnaire to collect data from teachers about the practices of distributed leadership (See Appendix A). The survey utilised a 5 point (1 to 5) Likert scale having items such as 'strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree' on it. The survey has been developed from the *Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS)* Copyright © 2004 (for the permission to use this scale see Appendix B) by the Connecticut State Board of Education in the name of the Secretary of the State of Connecticut (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2004). This instrument was selected because it was specifically designed to measure distributed leadership, one of the main foci of this study. Considering contextual difference, I used thirty five items out of forty from this scale that are relevant to the Bangladesh context. I had eliminated five items, one example being 'the school curriculum is aligned with the state's academic standards' since the Bangladesh school curriculum is set, not open to modification.

Participants and settings

The study was conducted over three months from November, 2010 to January, 2011. The participants in this study were the principals and twenty (4x5=20) teachers of four secondary schools in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. The schools were selected purposively from ten top ranked schools in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations in the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh, of the academic year 2009-2010, as the purpose of the study was to investigate principals' perceptions of effective leadership in successful secondary schools. The principals were chosen because they are recognised for their interest and knowledge of current educational research and their ongoing involvement in school improvement strategies that have been demonstrated in public examination results for several years. The teachers were selected by me randomly among those who were present at school during the time I conducted the interviews with principals.

Blue school is a private school, with a non-teaching principal, who formerly had a career with the armed forces, and two vice principals, one each for the two different shifts: morning and day shifts. The morning shift starts at 7.30 am and is for girls and the day shift for boys starts at 12.30 pm. This school provides education to the secondary and higher secondary levels, in both Bengali and English, following the national curriculum. With nearly 2500 students and 156 teachers, Blue school has become one of the top ranked schools because of its achievements in public examination for the last few years. This school has set records with 100% passes and getting the highest GPA 5.00 which rates around 95% in SSC examination in recent years. The school has a strong academic tradition, which has continued under the leadership of the principal who has been there for a few years.

Green School is one of the most renowned girls' schools in Bangladesh maintaining a splendid past record. It was established at Dhaka, the capital city, before the foundation of Bangladesh in 1971. This school is a private school, providing education from Grade One to Grade Twelve, in both Bengali and English, following the national curriculum. This school has several different campuses. It has a wonderful record in achieving 100% pass in SSC and in getting GPA 5.00 for several years. The principal of Green School has worked for 22 years in the main campus of this school, first as a teacher then as principal for several years.

Yellow school is a leading public school in Bangladesh, maintaining an outstanding reputation since its beginning. The government schools in Bangladesh are categorised in four groups: A, B, C and D. This school is in group A for its high achievement. Yellow school provides education for grades one to twelve. It follows the national curriculum and Bengali is the medium of instruction. Though the government schools seldom achieve results that put them in the top twenty institutions of SSC examination, this school attains such results most years.

Pink school is one of the most famous private schools in Bangladesh. Starting as a junior secondary school, this institution now offers education for Grades One to Twelve. It provides education for both girls and boys, but splitting them into girls in the morning shift and boys in the day shift, which is not co-educational education. Following the national curriculum, Pink school uses both Bengali and English in instruction. Besides the main campus, Pink school offers education in two other campuses. The principal manages her school with the help of assistant head teachers for different shifts. There are 161 teachers. This school is also

renowned for its excellent results in SSC examinations such as 100% pass and GPA 5.00 for several years.

The selection of schools was based on multi-dimensional considerations which involved identifying various factors of interest in a population and representation of each of the factors (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). As I wanted to be comprehensive in my research, I was aware that this study required responses from both male and female principals. Besides, as there are different types of secondary schools in Bangladesh such as boys, girls and co-education schools, I was interested to get examples of leadership from these different settings. So, four principals (two male and two female) from different types of secondary schools, one public and three private, were selected for this study. The schools varied in terms of gender with one boys' school, one girls' school and the other two providing education for both boys and girls in different shifts.

Twenty teachers were selected for the survey. Five teachers from each school were selected randomly from the teachers who were present during my visit to the schools for the principals' interview. Longer-serving teachers were prioritised in the selection process since their principals indicated they knew more about school leadership.

In this study, I have used the term 'principal' only, for 'school heads', although they are named either principal or head teacher in different types of secondary schools in Bangladesh. There are two different types of secondary educational institutions for this level of education in Bangladesh: secondary and higher secondary. The secondary schools provide education up

to class ten whereas higher secondary institutions run their programme up to class twelve. The head of the secondary schools is called head teacher whereas the counterpart is called principal. Since this study includes two secondary and two higher secondary schools, there are principals and head teachers. As the commonly used term throughout the world is principal, I have used only the term 'principal' in this study.

I considered how I could get access to collect data in these schools. A number of upper ranked secondary schools of Dhaka city were participants of a leadership project I was involved in some time ago. A part of my job was to visit them at different times to observe their leadership practice and the impact of the training. The principals of these schools are personally known to me. I also visited some secondary schools in London, UK, with some of them, as a part of the project which allowed me to build relationships with them. Some of the principals came to the University of Canterbury, New Zealand during the initial stage of my Master of Education programme, which also helped me to make contact and involve them in this study. Though I had to take one school without previous introduction, my profession of teaching to the principals in the executive Masters Degree at the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka, allowed me access to that school.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews and surveys were used as the methods of data collection for this study. I developed a set of key open-ended questions for the interview (Mutch, 2005). This type of interview provides direction so that the content is focused on the stated issues, but allows the participants to explain their perspective using language that is natural to them

(Burns, 2000). Each principal was interviewed once. Each interview lasted for around 30 minutes to 45 minutes and was conducted one-to-one. Mutch (2005) suggested that these criteria enable a more in-depth view of the problem from the participants' perspectives. On the other hand, Cohen et al. (2000) indicated that because of flexibility in the sequencing and wording of questions, the interviewer may reduce the comparability of responses. As the school settings differ significantly, I have not made direct comparisons between the principals.

To set up the questions for the interviews, a pilot interview was trialled with a principal who was not included in this study. There were five initial questions for the interview and the pilot interview determined whether the questions chosen elicited the depth of responses sought in this study. The responses to the sample interview indicated that the interview had allowed the principal to respond to the questions in-depth but required the inclusion of two more questions plus some modification of the existing questions. Seven questions were asked during the interview sessions. These were:

1. What does effective school leadership involve?
2. What leadership approaches do you use as a principal?
3. What helps and hinders you in using these leadership approaches?
4. To what extent do you involve your teachers in leadership activities?

5. What professional leadership learning have you had and how has it influenced the way you lead?
6. What leadership activities do you think would make your school more successful?
7. What are the challenges you might encounter in implementing these activities?

The interviews were videotaped digitally and transcribed. Though audio-taping is handy to use, I decided to utilise a video recorder because of the limitations of audio-taping. According to Cohen et al. (2000) when using an audiotape the transcription is only the record of audio data where the contextual factors such as visual and non-verbal aspects is not noted. I think the contextual data was important for my research. During the interviews, the emotion or body language of the principals was helpful in interpreting responses on leadership and distributing leadership activities.

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed them verbatim. Though different systems are available for transcription and which vary in their degree of exactness (Flick, 2009), it was imperative that as a novice researcher, I transcribe all verbal data from the recordings of the interviews. The data obtained through interviews is written up in the form of narratives of the four principals. In addition, a survey was used to measure the extent of distributed leadership practices evidenced in the school.

An information letter for the teachers included reference to permission gained from the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, and a brief explanation of the study. The letter also

mentioned that teachers' participation was voluntary and estimated the time required at 15 to 20 minutes. Prior to conducting the interviews, I made a request to the principals to give me permission and a schedule to distribute the questionnaire among teachers. When the principal granted permission and provided a date for me to distribute the survey, I kept strictly to the schedule. After completion of the survey forms, teachers returned them to their principal and I collected them from the principals after the interviews.

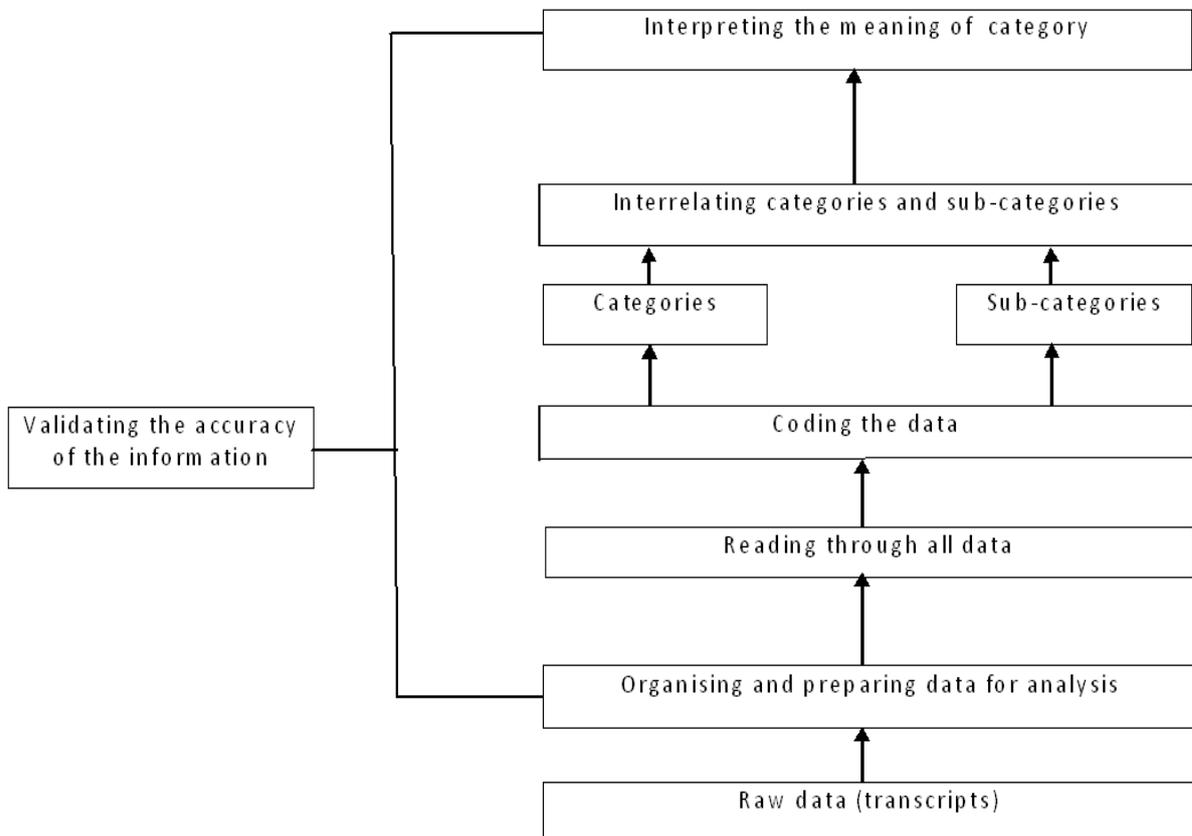
Data analysis

Data analysis is a challenging aspect of mixed method research. Data analysis involves working with data systematically; organising interview transcripts, breaking them into units, synthesising them, theorising about them for the researcher's own understanding and deciding how to present the results to readers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). After interviewing, I immediately wrote transcripts in the language they used. One principal gave his interview in English while the other principals conducted theirs in Bengali. The Bengali transcripts were translated into English afterwards and sent to a person who is expert in both Bengali and English to check the accuracy of translation. After feedback from that person, I finalised the transcripts. The transcription was given to the participants to see make any changes to the transcripts so they reflected exactly what they meant to say.

After each interview, I highlighted the significant dialogues in interviews as notes. The notes from different transcripts were re-arranged together to make analysis easier. After reading the data carefully, I wrote summaries. While summarising, I made connections between my interview notes. In doing so, I was able to narrow down the focus for this study.

Transcripts were analysed to link the findings to the situations, linking concepts or categories. The data collected in the interviews was numbered sequentially which facilitated location of data. While I was reading the data, a preliminary list of coding categories was developed including noting down the relationships among them (Miles & Huberman cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I highlighted different codes in different colours and then copied and pasted them into another file under categories. In developing the codes, unfamiliar and unaccustomed words and phrases were identified and fitted together under some generic code (Spradley cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). After putting them into preliminary coding categories, I went through them again and the coding categories were modified and developed iteratively. The qualitative data analysis process was not linear; it involved going back and forth relating statements, events, and categories. This led to a limited number of categories being formed and they were reduced again by reformulating those categories that overlapped. Major categories were divided into sub-categories. Finally, five categories and eighteen sub-categories emerged.

I used following steps (adopted from Creswell, 2009) to analyse the data collected from interviews.



Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the survey responses to find out the elements of distributed leadership evident in these Bangladesh secondary schools. I calculated the means and standard deviations to explore the dimensions of distributed leadership in the schools. The thirty-five items of the survey were divided into the four dimensions of distributed leadership. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to calculate the mean and standard deviation of each item of every dimension. The overall mean and standard deviation

of a dimension was calculated by adding up the means and standard deviations of individual items and dividing by the total number of items to determine the scores for the practice of the dimension.

Rigour, trustworthiness and validity

Rigour in qualitative research may be ensured through the overall process conducted during a study. Mays (1995) states that, "the basic strategy to ensure rigour in qualitative research is systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication" (p. 109). I had developed my research consciously and systematically to ensure the rigour of this study. Additionally, Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton (2001) determine trustworthiness as "the criteria of validity, credibility and believability" (p. 324). Trustworthiness of qualitative research is also established through every stage of the research process such as data collection, analysis and reporting (Harrison et al., 2001). I was recurrently alert to my own views to achieve trustworthiness so that I was positive and non-judgemental in writing the findings of the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1993).

I followed a number of strategies so that my research enabled the participants to be comfortable. The principals were asked to select the interview time and venue according to their preference. Focus questions for the interview were sent to the participant principals prior to the interviews. They also had the opportunity to check their interview transcripts. This opportunity helped to establish respondent trustworthiness (Harrison et al., 2001; Silverman, 2001). I tried to ensure that their responses reflected their understandings about leadership. Participants' actual statements are used as quotations when the findings are

reported along with my interpretations. These strategies determine that the researcher analysis echoes an appropriate representation of the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Besides, I had no intention to generalise the findings emerging from this research.

The survey instrument was developed in several stages to ensure content validity. Firstly, thirty-five items were adopted from the existing questionnaire of DLRS and modified according to Bangladesh context. Secondly, the newly developed questionnaire was trialled with four principals who came from Bangladesh to receive intensive school leadership training at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. They were asked to respond to each item of the survey. Thirdly, the responses were reviewed and the questionnaire revised to finalise the items based on any misunderstandings related to the questions. The changes to the survey were recorded as part of recording the research methods of this project.

Presenting the findings

For the analysis I used an Inductive process where a specific idea leads to generalisations and then a conclusion. Lichtman (2006) implies, "An inductive approach moves from the specific to general and builds to a conclusion. In such approach, one thing leads to another, a kind of scaffolding" (p. 33). The emerging categories from the interviews were explored. The writing was organised into a coherent structure with an introduction, a content and an end. The introduction focuses on the general background of the contents and design of the findings. The middle section focused on my insights, arguments and data supporting any claims. The conclusion includes the main ideas from each of the categories and whether the ideas is consistent with the views of the teachers' survey or not.

In the presentation of the discussion, my analysis, explanation, and ideas were interpreted from the data and were written from my point of view. Implications of the findings and recommendations are given for leadership practice and future research on leadership. Richardson explains the need of the researcher's voice as, "I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn't know before I wrote it" (as cited in Anderson, 2003, p. 38). This enabled me to become an integral part of the research process. Quoting the participants and placing short sections from the interview notes and other data supported the findings and recommendations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Questions which the reader might have are also raised and dealt with in this section.

From the means and standard deviations of the survey data, I discuss the extent and level of distributed leadership in those schools. Therefore, the interpretation of the survey results was able to be triangulated with information gained from the interviews with principals.

Ethical considerations

Prior to this study, ethical approval was sought from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) of College of Education, University of Canterbury. It was not possible to carry out this research without the approval from the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, which had been collected from Bangladesh (See Appendix C). Written permission from the participant principals and teachers was collected. In the information sheets for principals and teachers, I provided the purpose of the study, the focused areas, data collection methods, how the findings would be used and gave them time to decide about their involvement in the

research (See Appendix F and G). Copies of their permission are kept as a record of their approval and these are available on request.

Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that information would be kept confidential. Anonymity was maintained during data collection and in writing about the findings. The face-to-face interviews were conducted privately and there was no identifying information contained in the questionnaire responses so that anonymity was maintained. I have used pseudonyms for all principals and their schools for the purposes of reporting the findings. Moreover, during the interviews and surveys, I reminded them about their rights to withdraw from the study and provided them my contact address and phone number if they wish to review the information they provided. Data is stored confidentially in my computer protected by a personal password. I tried to keep potential risks to the participants at a minimal level. Participants' were given access to the transcripts for their comments.

Limitations

The validity of this study depends on the sincere and reflective responses of participants to the distributed leadership survey and the principals' interviews. It was critical to measure what principals thought and believed openly and to gain the teachers responses in an unbiased way. A limitation might exist in the survey result if teachers discussed the survey items with their principals before responding and did not respond in an unbiased way.

This study is limited by the parameters of perceived thoughts and beliefs of principals about school leadership and the extent of their understanding and use of the terms 'distributed leadership'. The outcomes would be more bona fide if I undertook several interviews regarding each principal's leadership practices and could do the survey on a large scale. Readers are expected to recognise that the purpose of this study is to shed light on school leadership in Bangladesh secondary schools rather than look for ambiguity in leadership practice. Another limitation of this study is that the number of participants was limited; so I do not have sufficient breadth to make generalisations as in some other qualitative research (Lichtman, 2006). It cannot represent an overall picture of school leadership in Bangladesh or be extended as a commentary on leadership in all schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the results from the principals' interviews and teachers' surveys about leadership practice and the extent of distributed leadership at secondary schools in Bangladesh. The data for this study was collected over a three month period and comprised the following: a) semi-structured interviews with principals and b) survey of teachers on distributed leadership. These data sources enabled me to address the following research questions:

1. How do principals interpret and practise school leadership in Bangladesh?
2. What do principals think contributes to effective leadership in secondary schools in Bangladesh?
3. What elements of distributed leadership are used in secondary schools of Bangladesh?

4.1 Interview findings

The following sections are organised into categories. Five categories and eighteen sub-categories emerged from the analyses of the interviews. I focus on each of the categories and provide examples from the findings as they relate to the experience and practice of leadership of the principals in Bangladesh.

1. Effective leadership
2. Leadership approaches
3. Teacher leadership
4. Professional learning and training of principals
5. Challenges for school leadership

4.1.1 Effective leadership

Description

The principals think that leadership is a complex term which is difficult to define, as school leadership is not considered as a concept in education in Bangladesh. Principals in Bangladesh are positional leaders who are appointed, according to the rules, after acquiring certain teaching experience. Blue Principal explained that the purpose of leadership at school is to inspire the students and teachers for the betterment of both. He mentioned:

Good results come through good students and good teachers. Good students might turn into bad students if they don't study properly. And good teachers also may be the cause if they cannot do their job properly. There the question of leadership comes- inspiring the students to study properly, to be attentive to their lessons, make them understand what the benefit comes into the senior students' lives (from education).

Principal, Blue School

The principals consider their schools are successful because of their leadership. They think that effective leadership can be defined in different ways and it varies according to the

person. The principal of Blue School explained that leadership is effective when the leader motivates followers to work according to the rules. He said, “Effective leadership involves team building, inspiring, leading, showing the path to the followers, doing work, abide by the rules”.

Though that principal put importance on leaders’ initiative, another principal argued that teachers had a significant role in effective leadership:

I want to say that from the viewpoint of effective leadership, main tasks are to be started by the help of teachers.

Principal, Green School

Others believe that effective leadership depends not only on the role of leader; the stakeholders, such as students, teachers, parents and community members play an important role in making them successful. They think that the interaction among the stakeholders is a major reason for their success:

For effective leadership, intellectual abilities of a leader are not essential. Rather, effective leadership requires a leader’s good networking with the people concerned in different areas, may be the relationship with teachers, members of governing body and other staff. In governing an institution, we need the cooperation of people working at different stages.

Principal, Pink School

In effective leadership, the factors that should necessarily be kept in view are ‘teacher versus teacher interaction’, ‘head teacher versus student interaction’ and ‘teacher-student-guardian triangle relationship’. The progress of a school significantly depends on how effectively it establishes a relationship among these three factors.

Principal, Yellow School

Their comments indicate that they believe that effective leadership is important for successful schools, and such leadership is characterised by good interaction among principals, students, teachers, parents and community members.

Decision-making

The principals reported that decision-making is important for effective leadership. The future of a school depends on the decision-making of the school principal, but they prefer to have discussion first in order to make good decisions. Principals generally do not make judgements based only on their own opinions because they understand that the right decision is more likely to come through majority opinion. For example, a principal noted:

It is not necessary for a leader to know everything or better understand every aspect. I think that, if any ideas come out from the ten people altogether, some good decisions may then be accomplished by combining those ideas.

Principal, Pink School

Another principal makes his academic policies and decisions with the board of governance and academic council through discussion:

We discuss academic purpose at the council. And major important academic policies are decided in the board of policies meeting of the Board of Governance. There after discussion, we make some decisions in some aspects.

Principal, Blue School

This principal advocates for a democratic system, but another principal believes in the active involvement of students and teachers in decision-making. He often meets several times to arrive at consensus among teachers to reach a suitable decision:

Persistent attempts are made until it becomes helpful for the learners or effective support for achieving the targets and goals of the school. It can be such that, when an area under discussion is withheld, I revisit it second time, third time and more times (if necessary). And proper results finally come out this way.

Principal, Yellow School

These principals indicate that there are different ways to come to a decision. One principal depends mainly on the senior teachers for important decisions. She stated:

I have made decisions on the basis of everybody's opinion. Not actually the staff council; I make these decisions through the support of senior teachers. By acknowledging their opinions, I make important decisions related to academic issues. It will never be good if I only depend on my decision alone without considering the ideas of most people. I think, without considering the combined decisions of seniors, a single decision cannot completely be fruitful.

Principal, Green School

All the principals use discussion for decision-making. They use different styles according to the issues but always tried to consider others opinions without bias. They revisit and revise their decisions when that is deemed necessary.

Ways leaders are effective

The principals take initiatives to make their leadership effective. They monitor teachers' work to ensure that they are doing their jobs properly. Blue principal always tries to evaluate progress on delegated tasks by seeing the outcome. He mentions:

I think through supervision, monitoring and motivation, I can ensure that they (teachers) work properly in the classes. The leader has to be very open-minded. Basically also has to be careful, cautious and need to supervise and monitor. Personally, I feel that seeing is believing. So I would like to do as soon as possible to see things for myself and others.

Principal, Blue School

He has a reward and penalty system to motivate the teachers though that is not widespread in all secondary schools in Bangladesh. He added:

I try to inspire them or give them incentives in various forms. They'll get a good job or a good salary. We want to give them a bonus and s/he will also want to get (a bonus) after a good result. So, there we have both, you can say reward and punishment system for the teachers and students.

Principal, Blue School

Pink Principal tries to let the teachers understand that her actions are for the betterment of the school:

The person who leads should understand the feeling of the teachers and be able to motivate them according to what s/he thinks will be good for the institution.

Principal, Pink School

The principals intend to be effective by engaging the help of their teachers. Their endeavour is to get the jobs completed in time and to motivate teachers by providing rewards and penalty. They also try to understand the teachers' emotions to encourage them.

4.1.2 Leadership approaches

Approaches used in schools

The principals believe in using different leadership styles in relation to time, situation and context. They assume that a specific leadership approach does not work effectively in all situations. Blue principal revealed that in most cases he employs participatory leadership approaches where he considers everyone. He bases his opinion on those of others making

decisions and make disciplinary decisions himself using the organisational statutes. He also uses distributed leadership when responsibility is shared, as shown by his comments below:

I try to follow here participatory leadership that means I try to listen to all concerns and get their (teachers') opinions. Maybe I can accept any of their opinions which seem to be the best to me or I can also base a decision on their opinion. I can also give my disciplinary decision based on my own ideas. But I consider what is the best for the collective group or for the betterment of the institution. That's the style of my leadership. Our leadership is also distributed. I cannot do everything myself. So, responsibility for various subjects is distributed among them.

Principal, Blue School

It would appear that the principal is referring to task allocation, rather than a broader definition of distributed leadership in his last statement. He also added that sometimes he has to decide instantly without engaging others in the process:

If there is something happening, I need to give an instant decision. At that time, I could not listen to many people, that's also true. So at that time, I have to decide myself using my own judgment.

Principal, Blue School

Other principals advocate for democratic, distributive, co-operational and instructional leadership to reach their schools' goals. They view their school as being like a classroom and distribute their work to particular teachers as one mentioned:

One should consider his school a classroom. A head teacher has to follow democratic leadership in managing all teachers, students and supporting staff. Sometimes I follow distributive leadership. Besides, co-operational leadership is followed and sometimes instructional leadership is operated to achieve the goal.

Principal, Yellow School

Green Principal considered that her leadership is distributed among teachers so that she can assign a specific teacher to a particular task. She mentioned:

Our leadership is distributed among the teachers. We separately distribute the responsibility to particular teachers to take accountability for one thing, for example only the academic side.

Principal, Green School

The principals made clear that they use different leadership approaches to make their schools successful, and while a number of principals referred to 'distributed leadership' this could perhaps be more accurately described as delegating of tasks and responsibilities.

Delegating tasks

The principals noted that to be effective leaders; they have to select the right person for specific jobs. They try to work collectively in allocating tasks. They allocate their tasks early in the academic year and teachers complete their jobs according to the assigned schedule. They delegate tasks for teachers, discussing with all teachers and taking skills into account:

We individually assign the responsibilities to the teachers at the beginning of a year. They do their job in time as per the assigned responsibilities distributed to them. We do not actually delegate responsibilities at once. We take suggestions asking all teachers who is suitable for the particular job. S/he is then selected.

Principal, Pink School

We properly distribute the responsibilities among all the teachers. After properly distributing our work, different functional areas of activity have to be determined and distributed to the teachers suited to their talents and expertise.

Principal, Yellow School

The Principals realise that involving teachers with good professional skills is very important for effective leadership in their schools. They are accustomed to considering personal skills, knowledge and expertise in allocating jobs as noted:

We get our tasks accomplished by assigning to those who seem to be competent for a particular area. I also mentioned that, for governing a group of members of the individual committees, teachers are given responsibility suited to their talents. Considering their areas of expertise, I distribute the responsibility among the teachers to conduct the classes and different sessions.

Principal, Green School

A participant may be more expert than anyone else in a particular subject. For this, priority should (consciously) be given, to those who have better expertise in a particular subject.

Principal, Yellow School

Another principal held the same view and she selects a person for several years if the person does a job better than others. She added:

We give responsibility to those who we think are fit for a particular sector. The responsibility is given for one year. If anyone does well, the time period is extended for him/her.

Principal, Pink School

Teachers' academic background is considered in allocating teaching jobs:

Somebody having a science background is given science subjects. Somebody from languages gets the language subjects.

Principal, Blue School

The principals recognised a number of factors in delegating tasks, such as, personal skills and competency, time of delegation, and selection of a person for one or several times, which assisted him or her in getting the task done in a timely and effective way.

Co-ordination and co-operation

The Principals explained how they make their leadership effective. After delegating tasks, they have to implement them with the help of others. Every school has a large number of students. Many tasks go to make up school success. Principals understand that without the cooperation of all teachers, it is difficult to get the entire job done. One gave an example of how cooperation is important:

By assigning tasks on the basis of their proficiency and thereby coordinating those activities we can construct a study tour (field trip). In this case, it's not possible to manage about more than three hundred (300) students only by the supervision of three or five teachers. To overcome the situation, head of an institution has to coordinate all subjects by using information. However, in coordinating among all these subjects, a head teacher has to play the major role.

Principal, Yellow School

In addition to that another principal achieves successful outcomes by involving all of her staff. To gain the best outcome for controversial issues, she reviews her decisions several times and tries to link them:

In any significant action or in any big decision, we involve every teacher and work together by the efforts of all. We try to negotiate the controversial things. We do not only depend on single decision. We sit again to clarify the decision taken earlier and after reviewing this we take final one.

Principal, Green School

The principals coordinate the tasks and teachers cooperate with each other. The principals all indicated that they expect all teachers to work collectively, and enterprise in which they, the principals, play a vital role.

Problems in delegating tasks

Principals cannot do the entire job of a school by themselves. To make the school effective and to get the job done they distribute their tasks. They explained how they face difficulties in distributing their jobs and in getting them completed. Sometimes more than one teacher wanted one specific job, while none of them wanted to receive a different one. Pink Principal mentioned that “The problems can be found in this case that, some of them feel that they are deprived of getting the responsibilities while some are enjoying the same. I have to take care in distributing jobs suitable to their qualification”. She gave an example:

There may arise such issues in school that students do not find any interest in a particular teacher. Why they do not wish to continue in his/her class, and why they are not attending in his/her class; the reasons of which have to be identified. We need to know whether the teacher is not good looking or s/he talks too much in the class for which students are disinterested in the class. Depending on the reasons, we take our steps accordingly.

Principal, Pink School

While the above principal got complaints about a teacher from students, another principal received complaints about cooperation and task completion from teachers as he said:

I sometimes get complaints. Maybe the president of the team or vice of the team complains that, sir, so-and-so teacher is not working, s/he is not cooperating.

Principal, Blue School

Green Principal faces different types of problems. When they are given their classes at the beginning of the year, many of the teachers wanted to get the same subject as others. The principal expected teachers to be responsible for the class for a whole academic year, even new teachers. However, she revealed that:

In preparing a timetable, the demand from teachers caused some troubling situations. Some of them demanded the same subjects. Again, many of them wanted the same class when it was given to other teachers who, we think, are appropriate for that class. Many of the new teachers wanted to be the class teacher even when they had no experience in this school environment.

Principal, Green School

She added that, sometimes one teacher might want to engage with several committees which may create problems in getting the jobs done (because they had too much to do). She had encountered some complications when this occurred and tried to overcome them through understanding as she articulated:

We cannot give the responsibility of several committees to a single teacher. If we do so, the work cannot skilfully be done. In handling this case, many complications take place. Whatever the problem, we try our best to minimise this. We minimise problems through understanding. We make the teachers realise that a person should not be engaged in different committees if he wants to achieve good things.

Principal, Green School

Principals have pointed out some impediments to delegating tasks. They encounter problems in finding the right person for the job, especially when one task is demanded from more than one teacher and they get complaints about how they are not cooperating with each other.

4.1.3 Teacher Leadership

Description

The principals identify teacher leadership as an important factor for successful schools, especially their leadership in the classrooms. One principal revealed that teachers who are able to control the class in a precise way can be considered as good leaders. He noted:

Actually, the leadership for teachers; conducting classes is a big field of leadership. Any teacher who can control the class properly and present effectively, is a good teacher in the class. And somebody who cannot control the class; always there is shouting, howling; when one speaks others cannot hear, that is harmful for leadership.

Principal, Blue School

Yellow Principal supported the above statement and further added some other fields where teacher leadership can be identified such as sports, study tour as shown below:

In classroom teaching, a teacher is a leader. He applies his leadership in classrooms. They are involved in designing classroom activities such as routines, sports programmes, examinations (class test, quiz) and in study tour arrangements.

Principal, Yellow School

The comments from the principals identify that teacher's leadership within classrooms is very important for the effective operation of their schools.

Leadership opportunities for teachers

During the interviews, the principals revealed that they usually attempt to engage teachers in leading various tasks so that they get the chance to experience leadership in diverse settings.

The allocation of these roles to teachers also helps the principals to get the work done on time. Some comments illustrate this:

They also get other assignments say making class routine, making year calendars, organising events, arranging their food, arranging accommodation, setting the classrooms for various competitions or making the field ready, decorating the area, the gate. Every job they do through that (their participation) they learn and become good leaders. They become good organisers by organising all these programs.

Principal, Blue School

Pink Principal agrees with the above statement and believes that leaders cannot play all the roles without the help of others. She involves capable teachers in coordinating and administrating training programmes. Besides, there are teacher representatives in her school who carry out specific administrative tasks. She explained that:

Though a leader is one, s/he cannot work without company. S/He supports others to come in leading to govern the programme. In any kind of training, where there are many tasks to accomplish, we tell our senior assistant head teachers to assign competent teachers to the governance of a matter of concern. And they inform us about the output of their particular activities. Here, we have teacher representatives and other selected teachers who are performing their role in administrative areas.

Principal, Pink School

Yellow Principal engages his teachers to monitor construction work at the school. Along with this, as a participant of the Connecting Classroom Project of British Council, Bangladesh, his school needed to maintain connections with other national and international schools. Some of the teachers took on these roles as disclosed in his interview:

After establishing relations with the overseas students, we are linking some students of our government schools and some of renowned schools with the foreign institutions.

Some teachers are carrying out the responsibilities for this. We also involve some teachers even in school construction work.

Principal, Yellow School

Opportunities for teachers to be engaged in leadership and management are offered. Principals mentioned that administration tasks, coordinating training and arranging cultural programmes are important.

Appreciation of innovative ideas

It became obvious during the interviews with principals that they welcome creative ideas from teachers. They appreciate any ideas that help to develop student learning as well as overall school achievement and enhanced reputation. The principal of Yellow School pointed out the examination result card preparing system of his school as an example of a new idea:

There was a time when we had to manually prepare the results sheet. This has now been replaced by a computerised system in response to the teachers' interests. Results are prepared through software in computers.

He added that to consider teachers' interests, he took different initiatives as far as he could. Teachers asked for school facilities to be modernised and he indicated that he tried to fulfil their requests:

Taking the interests of the teachers into consideration, we are going to modernise our computer lab. It is the demand of the teachers to use multimedia in classroom. It is a demand of time. Teachers are proposing those things.

Principal, Yellow School

The above statement indicates the value given to teachers' ideas. Green Principal believed that her teachers were committed to developing the school and willing to do a better job by

themselves since they considered the benevolence of the school would enrich their reputation:

Teachers themselves help me a lot. They do many things by their own initiatives. The goodwill of this school means the goodwill of themselves.

Principal, Green School

Here, principals explained that they encouraged new ideas from teachers to make their schools successful, especially ideas to do with delivery of curriculum and administration at classroom level. The overall enhancement of the schools' reputation was therefore used as a motivator for teachers to contribute.

Opportunity in choosing roles and degree of freedom

The scope of how much teachers were involved in leadership depended on the experience and skill of the teachers. In most cases, seniors were prioritised when tasks were allocated. The principals were in favour of engaging senior teachers since they were more experienced and expert in understanding what decisions needed to be made in each situation as shown in the following example:

We give priority to the seniors when making important academic decisions. We do it for this reason that, they are more experienced than juniors. They can well-understand which decisions are to be taken in which situation. In regard of the volume of work and ratio of involvement, seniors are given more priority to juniors.

Principal, Green School

This principal added that sometimes junior teachers who were skilled enough to do a job were also involved. Though she involved juniors in completing the task, she agreed that there were fewer opportunities for juniors in relation to seniors. She argued:

Last year some new teachers were appointed here. Among them, some who, I thought, have the quality of leadership had been involved in our committee, for example in routine committee. But juniors are given comparably a bit less opportunity.

Principal, Green School

The principals were in favour of teachers' freedom and what was important to motivate them to get the tasks done. They believed that teachers obtained autonomy to a certain level; sometimes full freedom, sometimes depending on the teachers' connection to the subject of the tasks. When principals were asked about that issue, they indicated that decisions were related to context. For example:

Teachers will decide what will have been taught by a particular spot visit or by a particular method. Teachers will select the people who will teach and who will help students in collecting information. And, at end of the day, what will be the evaluation system? In group work within a big school, when different sub-groups or sub-committees are constructed, they are given entire freedom.

Principal, Yellow School

They actually have to keep me informed about what they are doing. I normally do not say what they are doing in their particular shifts. They also enjoy some more degree of freedom.

Principal, Blue School

It is clear that the principals give priority to senior teachers (who are older in age) in delegating jobs and give them freedom in relation to the job.

Teachers' expectations of leadership

The principals explained that some of the teachers were interested in taking leadership in different fields. They believe that if someone wanted to be a leader, s/he needed to be courageous, a risk-taker and passionate about their work. Blue principal thought that there are a few teachers who are interested in being leaders as he explained:

Maybe there are few who are interested in taking risks; they can do any of the job effectively. So they become actually good leaders or have actually comprehensive ideas about leadership activities.

He added that while some are interested in leadership, most of them only want to do the routine job:

Everybody does not become expert in everything. Normally, somebody does the routine job, they usually do that thing. Somebody who arranges the food, usually most of the time they even do that type of responsibility like organising a picnic, arranging food for other committees.

Principal, Blue School

In contrast, another principal believes that every teacher wants to be involved in leadership:

We have different committees comprised of different teachers. For example, Staff committee, Academic Council, Sports Committee, Cultural Committee and so on. Naturally, everybody wants to come in these committees. They want to take the leadership.

Principal, Green School

Here there are contradictions between the principals' comments about the issue of who wants to be a leader. Whereas one principal thinks only some teachers are interested in leadership activities, other believe most teachers would like to take on leadership roles.

Training for teacher leadership

The principals considered that training can be a way to develop teachers' qualities. According to them, continuous training could help teachers to become good leaders. For this reason, they arranged training sessions and workshops for teachers with the help of trained teachers or renowned guest speakers as Blue principal mentioned:

On the job training, first we have three types of training. One is an orientation course for elementary new entrance. Then we have in-house training. Whenever our teachers go for some training or go abroad for a visit, they come back and they share their learning with other teachers. Third, we invite guest teachers and guest speakers.

This principal thinks that when a teacher got training from home or abroad, the learning should be shared with others in their school. He took initiatives to ensure that:

The methods learned from that training should be implemented in every class. To serve this purpose, after the completion of training by a teacher, we collect the teaching aids provided in that training session, make photocopies at our own expense and tell him/her to arrange a workshop ensuring that all his subject associates and other junior teachers are present at the workshop. This workshop is conducted from morning to evening. This is how we try to train up the different subject teachers in order to take them to the next steps.

Principal, Blue School

Yellow Principal agreed with the above statements and added that he attempted to utilise every training opportunity available for teachers' development. He explained that though some principals in Bangladesh resist training, thinking that participating in training interrupts classroom activities, he was in favour of it because training increases teachers' skills. As a result, he advocated for using every chance to encourage teachers to participate in training to grow their efficiency:

We arrange sessions for presenting new theories and ideas which our teachers acquired from abroad at different times. We try to keep our teachers updated letting them new ideas. I utilise every chance that comes, either nationally or internationally and either government or non-government. The traditional head teachers, in real cases, do not want to train their teachers for this reason that, it makes disturbance in the classroom activities. I think that, if teachers' training is increased, it will result in more positive outcomes; and not in hampering classroom activities.

Principal, Yellow School

As indicated above, the principals discussed how they facilitated their teachers to be leaders and what type of professional learning they organised for that.

4.1.4 Professional learning and training of principals

Professional learning

The principals reflected on their own professional learning and training. They indicated that they learn different aspects of school leadership through their professional contexts. In addition, they provided examples where they had acquired knowledge not only in this position, but through different stages of their professional life. During the interviews, one principal said:

We learn through every experience on the job. Say, I have been serving in the army and then manage an institution for twenty eight years. So through my working and career, at every stage as teachers, instructors, staff, leadership positions like as principal, we have learnt through our experience; that is a big learning.

Principal, Blue School

Pink Principal realised that she learned leadership through different roles as a teacher. She had to manage students and guardians as a psychologist, as a police woman or as a suitable role model when problems took place. She said:

Many things can be learnt by experience. As a teacher, I have to know how to teach students, how to motivate them and how to manage the haughtiness of the guardians when our students fail in examinations. Sometimes, I have to play my role as a psychologist, sometimes as a policewoman, sometimes as a mother. Through these different approaches, I need to motivate them all.

Principal, Pink School

Green Principal thought that her leadership was developed through the role of a class teacher. At that time, she tried to develop her students further than others did and aimed them for the top positions. She was carrying out her job for a long time in that school which helped her to achieve the leadership quality she believed:

I had a great contribution in my school leadership when I joined as a class teacher. I concentrated more on how I have to govern my students, how students can do their best to make good results and how my students will do better in competition with other sections. I am working here for 22 years. So, this experience gradually helped me to achieve the quality of leadership.

Principal, Green School

Throughout the professional learning of the principals, their roles as teachers were emphasised as being very important.

Leadership training

The principals expressed that there is currently little or no leadership training for school principals in Bangladesh. Sometimes workshops, seminars and symposiums on leadership were arranged. To be a school head, one has to gather teaching experience for a certain period which varies in government and non-government institutes. After being a school head, they get different short training related to leadership.

I have had only one professional training on management. However, I have 12 years of academic experience according to our country's requirement; actually I have more than that while I am working in this large institution. I completed a course on principles of management from NAEM (National Academy for Educational Management).

Principal, Pink School

The principal of Blue School, who was a member of the Bangladesh Army, underwent training in the Army related to leadership before being the principal of this institution. In addition, he received some other short time training from the British Council, Bangladesh:

We also had formal courses in the Army. We have a lot of courses and a number of participatory seminars, symposiums. The staff course was the highest course when I was doing the course. Staff courses are one year training. Besides, we also had education officer basic training and other form of many training in abroad Army and civil.

Principal, Blue School

Along with the above information, he explained about the duration of the training as:

I think, I have undergone three or four leadership training courses which were organised by the British Council. It was in total about seven/eight days training. I had Education Officers Basic Course (in Army) which was mainly on this education programme that was a four months course.

Principal, Blue School

Another principal explained his experience in a different way. As a principal of a government school, he got foundation training and education management training. Besides, he worked as a regional scout commissioner which was related to leadership. He also received some other short training on leadership:

I have worked 9 years as a Regional Scout Commissioner. Scouting is simply associated with leadership quality. I have Education Management Training from NAEM (National

Academy for Educational Management). Besides, I have foundation training and completed a course on School Connecting Network Programme Training. I completed a course on Office Management. Also have leadership training from TQI-SEP.

Principal, Yellow School

Green Principal was recruited for this position without taking any leadership training. She stated that, though some specific training helped her in leadership, she achieved the leadership quality through experience:

Firstly comes B.Ed (Bachelor of Education) training that helped me a lot. And many other training, for example, TQI (Teaching Quality Improvement) also helped me this way. I didn't obtain any special training on leadership. Mainly, I achieved this from my working experience in school. I obtained many other short time training opportunities.

Principal, Green School

The principals stated that they either got very little training related to school leadership or no training at all.

The need for formal training

The principals discussed the lack of training for school leadership in Bangladesh. They discussed the issue that there was no legislative obligation for a leadership degree to be a school head. They said that the B.Ed initial teaching degree was mandatory for being a principal in all secondary educational institutions. Given their lack of formal leadership training, they suggested that a formal leadership programme should be introduced to increase the skills of principals so that they can manage their teachers better and provide on-going leadership. An example of this is provided by the principal of Yellow School:

To become a head teacher, there is no compulsory training in Bangladesh. However, a B.Ed degree is a must for the persons who desire to be a head teacher. It does not matter; he is either in government or non-government school. I think that, more training on leadership is needed so that our teachers can be used more efficiently. We believe that, skill exceeds knowledge. If a head teacher lacks skill, how will he make his teachers skilled? Therefore, to increase proficiency of the teacher, all head teachers need to be more conscious.

Principal, Yellow School

Blue Principal agreed with the above statement and advocated for a formal programme saying that:

It should be formal training. Its value is obvious. Most of the teachers or head teachers in our country participate in the B.Ed training. They do not have any other training. So whatever leadership qualities they develop, they are instinctive. They do it from their own experience and use more intelligence. But there is hardly formal training except B.Ed program.

Principal, Blue School

Pink Principal put emphasis on the leadership programme as being related to the implementation of it. She thought that by getting training, it was possible to understand the techniques of developed countries and it would be better when it was implemented. According to her, someone might govern the school effectively without getting any leadership training as noted below:

If I get training on leadership, at least, I will know how the foreign countries are applying leadership and how we are doing. That is not all if I only know this. We can do better than before in terms of implementing the techniques that are being followed by other developed countries. Besides, only I got training but I didn't apply it; that is not fair. If someone asks me how well I can govern my school on the basis of leadership, I hope, I will be able to manage everything in spite of lacking leadership training.

Principal, Pink School

This statement indicates the importance of accountability and follow-up if principals participate in training.

It is apparent that there is no leadership programme mandatory for principals in Bangladesh though they are interested in receiving professional programmes for their personal development and the development of their schools. While some principals may have undertaken some training, they may not have put the training into practice, as indicated by the principal at Pink School. Most of their leadership skills have been developed through experience and intuition rather than professional training.

4.1.5 Challenges for school leadership

Challenges identified

The principals revealed that they had to face different challenges in their institutions with their specific contexts. Some of them encountered problems with insufficient physical facilities, many more students than the allocated seats. There were insufficient teachers in the schools, which impacts on student outcomes. The principals indicated that if the teacher-student ratio were generated according to a standard level based on the facilities available, then the school would be more successful. When the principals were asked to identify the challenges, they responded in the following way:

At first, I want to say that, the academic building, which I have, is containing double the students and not rational to its exact allocated seats. If we taught half of these students, we could concentrate more on every student individually. And they wouldn't need extra care in house.

Principal, Pink School

Green Principal argued that there are three types of educational programmes running in the same campus in her school which hampered the environment for learning and diminished the expected standards:

Our main campus is comprised of three parts - school, college and English version (of curriculum). As a result, physical facilities crisis is a great concern. If we had fewer students, our teachers would take more care of their students. Our campus area has been so large, it consumes much time when executing a task jointly. It also takes time to arrive at common perceptions. Everything would be more fruitful, if we made balance between teacher and student ratios by lowering the number of students.

Principal, Green School

The Principals had to face political pressure as a big challenge. Sometimes politicians or powerful people recommend that they do immoral work. Along with this the traditional rules and regulations became challenges as indicated in the following statements.

One challenge in our country is that *Tadbeer*, means recommendations and try to influence someone.

Principal, Blue School

To get this job done, the challenge comes first from political pressure. Besides, traditional educational rules and regulations is another challenge. Many of our rules are not updated.

Principal, Yellow School

Sometimes they realised they lack skilled manpower in their schools. The lack of training to develop the staff towards expertise was a challenge for school heads. Yellow Principal said:

Our support staff (teachers and staff) do not have the necessary skills. It is a big problem. Lack of manpower is another challenge. I need more teachers and staff for better education.

Principal, Yellow School

He further mentioned the administrative processes as challenging in educational leadership. According to him, educational administration is not controlled by teachers. If it were, they could understand the necessities of education in a better way. He said:

An administrative challenge is being considered. Education should be administered by the teachers. What changes are needed in education (future goal, qualification of teachers, international standard of education) should be decided by teachers. If these duties are done by others, it might not be justified.

Principal, Yellow School

The principals also talked about the lack of teaching aids and lack of facilities for teachers. They believed that if they could provide more facilities for teachers and more teaching materials could be supplied, their school would obtain more satisfactory results:

We have a lack of teaching aids. If government helped us in providing sufficient teaching aids especially for science classes, everything would then be in satisfactory standard.

Principal, Green School

I believe our teachers need more facilities. Facilities, for example, if I could not arrange personal sitting place, a departmental room can be arranged for them so that they can develop and keep their study materials.

Principal, Yellow School

Here the principals identified the challenges in school leadership such as lack of physical facilities, too high student-teacher ratio, political pressure, unethical recommendations for teachers' appointments and students' admission; and lack of skilled personnel when education is administered by others.

Ways of overcoming challenges

The principals overcome the challenges in various ways. One principal explained:

We have established some good traditions. People already know that *Tadbeer* or recommendations do not work much here. Even then people try- for admission, for getting a job or whatever.

Principal, Blue School

He added a further statement about when he tried to solve any problem according to the rules and regulations:

We say that we don't do anything except whatever is said in our statute or in our policy. If I violate policy then someone will come and ask why I have done so.

Principal, Blue School

Pink Principal believed, it was difficult and time consuming for government to find a solution to every problem since education in Bangladesh is administered by a central system.

It is difficult to solve all these problems. The government cannot find a precise way to solve these problems. By any means, we have to make our own way.

Principal, Pink School

This Principal said that principals meet their challenges through strategic use of existing rules, by receiving government help or through their own efforts.

4.2 Survey findings

My intention was to find out the dimensions of distributed leadership that are used in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Along with this, I intended to investigate to what extent principals practise this leadership in their particular contexts. Data was collected through the distributed leadership survey (see Appendix A), described in chapter three, with twenty teachers from the selected four schools. Here the distributed leadership survey results are presented as four dimensions (mission, vision, and goals; school culture; shared responsibility; leadership practices).

In the following section, descriptive statistics for each dimension are presented. There are four tables in this section. Each represents one dimension of distributed leadership. Items related to each dimension have been incorporated in each table. Along with the items, total numbers of participants have been given in the column N; and the Min and Max stand for the minimum and maximum response value for each item. The items in the survey were presented to participants in a Likert scale where minimum value is 1 (one) that stands for 'strongly disagree' and maximum value is 5 (five) which stands for 'strongly agree'. For each item, the mean has been calculated and presented in the tables, which signify the extent to which this item is being practised in the schools. The standard deviation of each item represents how diversified the responses are. The overall mean and standard deviation has also been calculated to show the average and range of responses for each dimension.

Dimensions of distributed leadership

4.2.1 Mission, vision and goals

A school can be effective if the stakeholders are aware of the mission, vision and goals of the school, which are meaningful, useful and related to national values, ethics and goals. The items in the survey related to school mission, vision and goals are presented in Table 1, which summarises the responses of twenty teachers.

Table 1 Mission, vision and goals

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
The school has clearly written vision and mission statements.	20	3	5	4.15	0.671
Teachers understand and support a common mission for the school and can describe it clearly.	20	3	5	4.40	0.598
If parents are asked to describe the school's mission, most will be able to describe the mission clearly.	20	1	5	3.90	1.252
If students are asked to describe the schools' mission, most will be able to describe it clearly.	20	2	5	4.05	0.945
School goals are aligned with the national educational statement.	20	2	5	4.60	0.940
The school uses a school improvement plan as a basis for progress.	20	2	5	4.40	0.821
Teachers and administrators (Head & Assistant Head) collectively establish school goals and revise goals annually.	20	4	5	4.85	0.366
Overall Mean and S.D				4.34	0.799

Table 1 demonstrates that there was considerable variation in the responses to the item, where the least value is 1 and highest value is 5. The mean for each of the items ranges from 3.90 to 4.85. Although the overall mean of 4.34 indicates that there is a mission, vision and goals present in the schools, the range of standard deviation of 0.366 to 1.252 signifies that there is some variation in teachers' thinking regarding the use of the components of a good mission, vision and goals in their schools. The understanding of parents and students about schools mission represent the lowest means in this table which represent teachers' perceptions, not teachers/parents' actual understanding.

4.2.2 School culture

School culture is considered as the second dimension for distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000) which works for student achievement as well as school effectiveness. The culture of a school depends on the norms, values, beliefs of the teachers, students, parents and community members of the school. If these stakeholders practise a mutual culture, a healthy school can be created. The following table shows the items related to school culture.

Table 2 School culture

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
There is a high level of mutual respect and trust among the teachers.	20	3	5	4.30	0.657
There is mutual respect and trust between school head and the teachers.	20	3	5	4.65	0.587
The school administrators (Head & Assistant Head) welcome teachers' input on issues related to instruction and improving student performance.	20	3	5	4.45	0.759
The school supports using new instructional ideas and innovations.	20	3	5	4.55	0.686
The principal actively encourages teachers to participate.	20	3	5	4.75	0.550
The principal actively participates in his or her own professional development activities to improve leadership in the school.	20	3	5	4.65	0.587
My principal and I jointly develop my annual professional development plan.	20	2	5	4.45	0.826
My professional development plan includes activities that are based on my individual professional needs and school needs.	20	3	5	4.55	0.686
Teachers actively participate in instructional decision-making.	20	2	5	4.15	1.137
The principal is knowledgeable about current instructional issues.	20	4	5	4.80	0.410
My principal's practices are consistent with his or her words.	20	4	5	4.75	0.444
Overall Mean and S.D				4.55	0.666

In Table 2, most of the teachers responded in the range 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to each of the items, which is represented in the range of the item mean (4.30 - 4.80). The overall mean is 4.55 indicates that the participants reported that activities related to a strong school culture are present in their schools. The SDs also show that there is consistency in the responses to this component. Though teachers responded 'neutral' to 'strongly agree' for most items, some chose 'disagree' on the items in getting opportunity to participate in annual development plan and instructional decision-making.

4.2.3 Shared responsibility

Given the indication by principals in their comments about their school's effectiveness, teachers' opinions about teachers' involvement in important school decision and policy-making process was sought as part of this survey. Parents' cooperation can also help the principals to make the schools successful. If teachers, students and parents consider the school performance as their common responsibility, the school can reach its goal easily. The following table presents such responses related to shared responsibility brought out from the teachers:

Table 3 Shared responsibility

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
Teachers share accountability for students' academic performance.	20	4	5	4.80	0.410
Government resources are directed to those areas in which student learning needs to improve most.	20	2	5	4.00	0.725
The school is a learning community that continually improves its effectiveness, learning from both successes and failures.	20	2	5	4.30	0.923
The school's daily and weekly schedules provide time for teachers to collaborate on instructional issues.	20	2	5	4.00	0.858
The school clearly communicates the 'chain of contact' between home and school so parents know whom to contact when they have questions and concerns.	20	3	5	4.60	0.598
School teachers and parents agree on the most effective roles parents can play as partners in their child's education.	20	4	5	4.65	0.489
The school makes available a variety of data (e.g. school performance) for teachers to use to improve student achievement.	20	4	5	4.45	0.510
Decisions to change instructional programmes are based on assessment data.	20	3	5	4.25	0.716
There is a formal structure in place in the school (academic council) to provide teachers opportunities to participate in school level instructional decision-making.	20	3	5	4.35	0.587
Overall Mean and S.D				4.38	0.646

Table 3 illustrates the highest and lowest value for all items related to shared responsibility were 2 and 5. The mean value for the items ranges from 4.00 to 4.80 and the overall mean is 4.38, which suggests that in general teachers think that there is a shared responsibility in their

schools. The SDs of this table indicate that the teachers' responses to the items developing shared responsibility were not so consistent. Table 3 shows that teachers share accountability for students' academic performance. Though schools provide data of student performance to improve their achievement, instructional changing decisions are not taken based on the data. Some teachers think that resources are not allocated based on need analysis and they lack time in daily routine for collaboration on instructional issues.

4.2.4 Leadership practices

Principal leadership can be expressed by the dimension of leadership practices in the school. The principals have important roles to develop the teachers' skills and maintain relationships to make the school effective. The leader protects teachers from non-instructional issues and engages them in instructional issues by creating an active learning environment. The following items related to leadership practices show the extent to which participants reported that school heads involve other teachers in leadership:

Table 4 Leadership practices

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
The school provides teachers with professional development aligned with the school's mission and goals.	20	4	5	4.70	0.470
Informal school leaders play an important role in the school in improving the performance of professionals and the achievement of students.	20	3	5	4.70	0.657
The school has expanded its capacity by providing professional staff formal opportunities to take on leadership roles.	20	4	5	4.40	0.503
Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient school time to permit them to make meaningful contributions to school.	20	2	5	4.15	0.745
Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient resources to be able to make meaningful contributions to the school.	20	2	5	3.75	0.716
Expert teachers fill most leadership roles in the school.	20	3	5	4.30	0.733
New teachers are provided opportunities to fill some school leadership roles.	20	3	5	4.35	0.587
Teachers are interested in participating in school leadership roles.	20	3	5	4.70	0.571
Overall Mean and S.D				4.38	0.623

Table 4 indicates leadership practices. It demonstrates how the participants responded to each item. Here the range of responses is from 2 to 5. The mean of the responses to each item is in between 3.75 (lowest) to 4.70 (highest). The overall mean is 4.38, which according to the teachers, suggests that teachers are interested in, and have opportunities to be involved in, leadership practices in their schools. The SDs presented indicate that there is

consistency in the responses of making up good leadership practices in the schools. It is significant in this table that teachers are interested in school leadership and schools provide them the opportunity but they lack time and resources for meaningful contribution in this role.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter provide data on principals' perceptions of school leadership in Bangladeshi secondary schools, and teachers' perceptions of the elements of distributed leadership in secondary schools in Bangladesh. The principals indicated that effective leadership, which guides and directs teachers to school success, is important for a school. Such leadership was characterised by good interaction among principals, students, teachers, parents and community members. All the principals reported that discussion is an important element of effective decision-making. While they reported using different styles to solve issues, they always tried to consider the opinions of others, without bias, rather than depending on their own judgment. The principals also reported revisiting and revising their decisions to ensure the best outcome for complex problems. They aim to get the jobs completed on time with the help of their teachers and some try to encourage teachers by providing rewards and punishments.

The principals use different leadership approaches to make their schools successful. They have to distribute their tasks to lead the school in an expert way and in delegating tasks they consider a number of factors such as personal skills and competency, and time of delegation. The comments from the principals strongly suggest that they consider leadership to be closely

linked to the allocation of tasks and responsibilities, and senior teachers get priority when tasks are delegated. Although principals reported facing a number of problems when delegating tasks, they believe that they have to coordinate the allocated tasks to make a collective and collaborative environment for improved teaching and learning.

When discussing teacher leadership within the classroom, principals identified the elements of such leadership as conducting training, connecting schools and arranging cultural programmes. The principals reported a variety of ways in which they provided for teachers to be involved in leadership and management activities. Although the principals reported that they facilitate teachers to be leaders and organise training for them, there were contradictory comments on the expectation of teacher leadership and whether or not all teachers want to be leaders. Principals articulated that there is no formal school leadership training available for principals in Bangladesh. They reported that most of their leadership skills have been developed through experience and intuition rather than training. The challenges in school leadership that they identified were a lack of physical facilities, too high student-teacher ratios, political pressure, unethical recommendations and lack of skilled personnel. The principals reported that they attempt to overcome challenges on their own, with the help of existing rules, or by taking government help.

In the survey results, it is evident that there was considerable variation in the responses to the items in different dimensions where the values varied from 1 to 5. The mean of different items ranges from 3.75 to 4.85, from which it is difficult to indicate precisely the extent to which each item was practised in schools. Although the overall mean of each dimension

indicates that the teachers think that there is some practice of the dimensions in their schools, the SDs suggest that there are some variations in thinking about the dimensions present in the schools. For instance, in the dimension 'mission, vision and goals'; the item about parents' understanding of the school's mission, the SD was 1.252. This depicts a significant variation in teachers' thinking about this item. Although the overall mean of each dimension was more than 4.34, the variation of their values indicates that some dimensions are practised in a better way than others in the schools. When teachers reported that activities related to a strong school culture are present in their schools, it was also indicated that they need to have more opportunities to practise and be involved to other dimensions of distributed leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The interpretation and implications of the findings presented in chapter four are discussed in this chapter, as they relate to how principals interpret and practise school leadership in secondary schools in Bangladesh. The extent to which the elements of distributed leadership are used in Bangladeshi secondary schools, is also discussed. The principals' interviews and teachers' survey enabled the participants to reflect on and share their perceptions and ideas in interpreting and practising school leadership. The teachers' survey allowed me to examine the extent and practice of distributed leadership and to compare the gaps in thought among principals and teachers. The principals' responses to the interview questions about becoming an effective leader were comprehensive and broad. The principals revealed clear thoughts about school leadership and how they could be effective in their schools. They noted that 'teacher leaders' could be the agents of improving teaching and learning as well as school success. They can be called a 'sleeping giant' of school improvement. The principals were cognisant of leadership challenges in Bangladesh.

For the purpose of discussion and the implications of the findings in this chapter, I use the distributed leadership dimensions and categories that emerged in chapter four. I begin the discussion with the dimensions of distributed leadership and continue with the categories

emerging from principals' interviews since this progression helps me to support, compare and identify contradicting data between survey and interview findings. The discussions consider the findings of this study in relation to current literature and conclude with recommendations for future research.

Dimensions of distributed leadership

Mission, vision and goals is the first dimension of distributed leadership in this study. The teachers' survey findings indicate that there are mission, vision and goals in the secondary schools in Bangladesh. In distributed leadership, developing a shared mission and vision, with significant goals is an important point that focuses student learning (Neuman & Simon, 2000). The teachers clearly state that they can understand and describe the school goals which are established by the collaborative venture of principal and teachers, but they are not confident about the understanding of parents and students regarding the school goals. Although this perception highlighted in this study is that of teachers and not of parents and students, it can be considered an important issue in secondary school improvement in Bangladesh. For the success of schools, it is necessary to have a clear vision which integrates beliefs about reaching the expected goals (Marks & Printy, 2003). Parents and students are important stakeholders; without their awareness and participation in the spirit of the mission and vision, it is difficult for the school community to reach school goals. There are many ways to raise awareness: one could be to publish newsletters on the updated mission, vision and goals of schools and distribute them among the parents and students or hold community-based meetings.

School culture, the second dimension of distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000b) covers the ways that the principal, teachers, parents and community relate to each other and work together. Beliefs, values and norms build the school culture (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Teachers reported that activities related to beliefs, values and norms are practised in their schools which help them to foster a good school culture. Most of the teachers believe that their principals are knowledgeable about current instructional strategies. According to the teachers, while the principals encourage them to participate in leadership tasks and value their input on instructional ideas; they do not actively involve them in instructional decision-making. This presents a contradiction. Since teachers are the leaders in classroom teaching, they know the problems and possibilities in teaching and learning better than others. As school culture is directed to influencing and impacting students' achievement (Elmore, 2000a); teachers' active involvement in instructional decision-making can enhance success in student learning and in developing a more productive school culture in Bangladesh secondary schools.

Schools can progress rapidly when teachers, students and parents carry through their responsibilities in a collaborative way. Phillips (2003) notes that students' achievement improves when responsibilities are shared. In my study, most of the teachers responded that they share responsibilities for students' academic performance and their schools provide data for use in changes that lead to improvement in students' learning. They indicate that schools value parents' role and input into their children learning. There is good communication between parents and teachers which enhances the development of shared responsibility in the schools. A few teachers added that they lack time to collaborate on instructional issues in

their schools and that changes in teaching strategies are not based on assessment data. They think that government resources are not properly directed to the most needed areas of student learning which acts as a barrier to developing shared responsibility in secondary schools.

‘Leadership practices’ is another dimension of distributed leadership. Teachers reported that schools do provide formal opportunities for taking on leadership roles and professional development programmes which are aligned with the mission, vision and goals of schools. This can provide effective leadership which helps to make the schools more successful (Copland, 2003). The opportunities for formal and informal teacher leadership are widely discussed in the category of teacher leadership, later on in this chapter. According to the survey, most of the teachers are interested in participating in leadership roles though they lack necessary time and resources for meaningful contribution to leadership. There are more opportunities available for experienced teachers and a few for new teachers. In Bangladesh, older teachers are generally considered as experienced as well as expert teachers in schools. The role of informal school leaders is reported as an important factor in improving the professional learning and student achievement in the survey. Sheppard (2003) implies that leadership needs to be distributed among formal and informal leaders for school success. But without sufficient time and resources, it is difficult for teachers to contribute meaningfully to leadership roles. Principals could arrange for time and resources for teachers to contribute to leadership roles which could boost school success.

Effective leadership

There is a widespread belief about the positive impact of leadership quality on school and student outcomes (Bush, 2008). The leadership of principals has been considered essential for school success for over two decades (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). In this study, principals noted that leadership is important for school effectiveness. According to the principals, the leader's role is one of building good interaction among the principal, teachers, students and community members. Principals guide the stakeholders towards a common set of goals and direct the students and teachers in reaching the goals for school improvement. This understanding resonates with several studies of effective leadership (Elmore, 2005; Northouse, 2007). These principals set schools goals to achieve the best outcomes in public examinations. They lead and manage their schools effectively to achieve this goal which means they earn a reputation for being successful leaders. The findings reflect a broad view of effective leadership that includes team building, inspiring, leading and showing a path to teachers. Effective school leaders enable others in schools to take leadership responsibility, inspiring and guiding them to reach school goals (Harris, 2003; Harris, Day & Hadfield, 2003). It is clear that these principals have understandings of leadership that they apply effectively to improve their schools.

Though the principals have broad ideas on leadership, the ideology of doing work according to the rules makes their path a narrow one in exercising effective school leadership. Secondary education in Bangladesh is administered through a central administration system where top-down methods are practised (Ministry of Education, Bangladesh [MoE, BD], 2011). The principals cannot make important decisions for the school themselves due to the

restraints of the current regulations. They revealed that for better decision-making, the rules and required procedures would need to be changed by the central administration to allow the principals to be more self-managing. In most cases changing procedures takes a long time and by the time regulations are changed the decisions would have already be made. Rules and regulations are essential for guiding the management of institutions but it is difficult to decide everything according to the rules without any freedom to adjust to the particular school context.

The principals are expected to implement the rules made by central administration, such as the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. So, principals face problems in reaching their school goals without freedom to make decisions at the at school level. They try to arrive at good decisions through discussion with stakeholders, but this must be done within boundaries, according to the rules. This indicates that bureaucratic system constraints on secondary school leaders prevent them developing fully effective schools in Bangladesh.

Interaction among school leaders and stakeholders of education enables schools to be successful (McBeth, 2008) and this has been emphasised by the principals of the successful schools in this study. Without good interactions, the schools cannot achieve excellent results for several years. Good relationships, mutual respect and trust among teachers also emerged as important elements of leadership in the survey of teachers. The leader's intelligence has been shown as a vital factor for leadership performance in schools, supported by Hallinger & Murphy (1985). In contrast to this, one principal argued that the intellectual ability of a leader is not important to be effective. But, this principal is considered as a successful principal in

Bangladesh based on the high achievement of her school in public examinations. It can be assumed that the principals of high achieving schools have intellectual ability since they are recruited in the course of high competition after proving their abilities in leading in different complex situations and leading their schools to certain goals.

Decision-making is an important aspect of effective leadership (Mulford, Kendall, Kendall, Edmunds, Ewington & Silins, 2008). Due to their position, principals have the authority to implement rules and regulations and make decisions accordingly (MoE, BD, 2011). All the principals in this study suggest that to enable democratic decision-making to happen, they seek ways to get teachers' opinions. It was revealed by Duke, Showers and Imber (1980) that schools became more democratic when there was increased participation of teachers in decision-making. Accordingly, Short (1998) advocates for teachers' involvement in school decision-making since it result in some advantages for principals. Sometimes controversial issues arise in decision-making, between work groups or at board meetings and these issues need to be solved. Conflict is common in schools; and it depends on the size and number of staff in a school since their perception, preferences and beliefs vary (DiPaola, 2003). Principals try to resolve conflict to maintain cooperation, harmony and collaboration among teachers (Owens, 1998) by reviewing their decisions several times if necessary.

In the Bangladeshi secondary schools in this study, decisions are not taken until teachers have opportunities to give their concerns through Academic Council (AC) which is parallel to staff council. Controversial topics are also discussed at the open forum of AC. In addition, major policy-making decisions are made in the meeting of SMC and GB where there are

representatives from teachers, parents, educators, community and the government. The local participation in secondary schools through SMC and GB has been ensured because “local participation would improve the quality of educational services” (Maha, 1995, p. 116). This participation enhances democratic decision-making and local supervision of the secondary schools in Bangladesh. It can be said from my experience that these authorities have a lot to do with the development of the school and if the committee does not promote school success the achievement of the schools may be disrupted. Effective principals can make their schools successful with the cooperation of this committee. This finding enriches understanding of decision-making in secondary schools and signifies the importance of involving teachers, parents and community members.

The principals identified that supervision and motivation of teachers were key factors in effective leadership. Supervision is an activity to empower teachers and a process of making a sustainable learning community in a school (Lee, Ding & Song, 2008; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Realising the necessity of motivation, one principal arranged bonuses for teachers but said that such incentives are not prevalent in Bangladeshi secondary schools. Generally, teachers of secondary schools get two bonuses during their major two religious festivals: Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha. The principals cannot give extra gratuity to the teachers as a reward because they are dependent on government for their funding allocation. In private secondary schools, teachers get their basic salary from the government with limited extra facilities such as house rent, health care fees and festival bonus (MoE, BD, 2011).

There is no funding source for principals to give money to teachers as rewards. It is only possible for the principals who can arrange money from student tuition fees or donations for school development from local rich people with the permission of BG or SMC (BISED, 2011). In my experience this usually happens in the well reputed schools established in the urban areas. The principals of high achieving schools use various strategies to augment their school funds, to provide more facilities for teachers. Provision of extra facilities can be considered as one of the significant contributors to achieve better results in city schools since other urban schools do not achieve good results in public examinations.

It appears that the principals in this study have a clear understanding of school leadership and they are able to operate their schools effectively. The bureaucratic system, which binds them to do everything according to the rules, sometimes hinders them from taking and making timely decisions for improving their schools. Though they utilise democratic systems for making decisions, where all teachers and community members are able to be involved, they cannot avoid the boundary of fixed regulations. If principals are allowed more freedom in decision-making, their leadership would be more effective in terms of improvement of student achievement.

Leadership approaches

There are different leadership approaches used in secondary schools in Bangladesh. According to the principals, participatory, democratic, distributed, situational, co-operational and instructional leadership approaches are employed by them in achieving school goals. I was confused about their understandings of each approach they named. For instance, one

principal cites her leadership as distributed because she delegates responsibility to particular teachers which indicates that she views distributed leadership as task distribution. Another principal describes his leadership as distributed because he distributes subject responsibility to his teachers. In the literature, distributed leadership is defined as engaging teachers and students in leadership activities for school development rather than confining it in task delegation (Duignan, 2006; Elmore, 2000a; Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2006). However, the principals interviewed in this study consider that distributed leadership means delegating tasks.

The teachers' survey responses indicate that each of the dimensions of distributed leadership (mission, vision and goals; school culture; shared responsibility; leadership practices) exists in the schools to some extent. It seems impractical to implement these dimensions of distributed leadership in schools when understanding of these aspects is not clear to the principals. Perhaps the teachers responded to the survey items without adequate knowledge of the theory. They seem very pleased with the leadership style of their principals. Although the principals are not very aware about the different approaches of leadership, they are able to delegate some tasks that help their schools to operate effectively. This finding adds to understanding of how experienced principals in Bangladesh can manage their schools effectively without adequate theoretical knowledge and that teachers are very happy with the way they do it. Theoretical knowledge might help them in understanding and practising leadership approaches and to better use teachers' expertise.

Delegating tasks is an important aspect of effective leadership. Findings reveal that the principals distribute their tasks at the beginning of a year by considering teachers' aptitudes and expertise. They also consider their academic background and sometimes extend the duration of an assigned job for several years, based on performance. Principals must coordinate and integrate the delegated tasks to achieve the goals of their schools (DiPaola, 2003). In this study, they use the effort of all teachers and enable contacts among them and they believe this contributes to their schools becoming effective.

The principals identified some problems in delegating tasks such as several teachers competing for one job. While several teachers may be interested in one specific task (class teacher, committee member); some others may not want to carry out the assigned work. From my experience I see class teachers as leaders where the teachers are seen to be responsible for the wellbeing and achievement of students of the class. They generally desire to hold these positions since that give them opportunities for leadership practice and to prepare them to be good leaders in the future.

This discussion of leadership approaches shows that Bangladeshi secondary school principals understand the importance of task delegation for teaching and learning improvement, which is the core of pedagogical leadership (Robinson et al., 2009). Though they did not mention pedagogical leadership by name, their prime focus is on teaching and learning improvement. In previous studies, pedagogical leadership was shown to have a stronger impact on school achievement and enhanced student learning more than other leadership styles, since the focus was on learning and how to teach rather than lofty goals (Robinson et al. 2009). The

allocation of leadership tasks to teachers who do not have formal leadership roles in schools is how distributed leadership is understood and implemented (ibid).

Teacher leadership

Teacher leadership has become a defining characteristic in school leadership and is considered as an important factor for reforming schools (Smylie, 1995). Along with the principal, teachers play important roles in developing schools. The school achievement in teaching and learning depends to a large extent on the leadership of both principal and teachers (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). The success of a school is achieved rapidly if teachers take the responsibility of improvement for themselves and for other teachers. This leads to development of teacher leadership, building leadership capacity in the schools. Smylie and Denny (1990) consider teacher leaders as helping and supporting colleagues to improve teaching and learning and to accomplish classroom responsibilities. To develop as leaders, teachers need the opportunity to lead different tasks in schools. Southworth (2010) advocates, "The first thing anyone needs to be a leader is the opportunity to lead. Without the opportunity to lead no one can really become a leader" (p. 188). The most visible opportunities for teacher leadership in Bangladesh include being teachers' representatives in SMC or GB, leading different committees in school and the role of the class teacher where these opportunities are limited in numbers.

The principals explained teacher leadership as centred in the classroom which aligns with Harris' (2003) explanation of the traditional concept of teacher leadership. The principals made it apparent that if one teacher can control the classroom in a better way, his/her

performance is good as a teacher and leader. Though Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) realised that the teacher who is not proficient in teaching needs to build up their classroom expertise before leading beyond the classroom activities, they also stated, “teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others towards improved educational practice” (p. 6). So, teacher leadership crosses the boundary of classroom tasks. A surprising finding from this study is that when the principals answered the questions relating to teacher leadership they were very clear that they saw it confined to the classroom. It can be assumed that they responded to questions without ample knowledge of the possibilities for teacher leadership. It is apparent that principals have limited knowledge and experience of how to engage teachers in different leadership aspects in order to make their schools more successful.

Different areas of involvement of teachers in leadership tasks have been identified in this study as areas for development of teacher leadership. Harris et al. (2003) emphasises how principals could engage teachers in leadership to develop their skills as future leaders and that these are key elements of effective leadership in schools. Schools can provide teacher leadership opportunities by giving them responsibilities which can encourage teachers in developing collegiality and collaboration (Sergiovanni, 1998). Through taking on responsibilities, teachers can play roles as leaders in formal and informal ways. Formal teacher leadership opportunities such as a committee head, a union representative or a member of the governing body or school managing committee (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) are limited in Bangladesh secondary schools. Teachers volunteering to support new teachers,

sharing ideas and bringing new ideas to school, which is considered informal leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), are seldom practised in Bangladesh.

Though secondary school teachers in Bangladesh have few opportunities to become involved in formal and informal leadership, the survey shows that teachers do get some opportunities to take on leadership roles in schools, such as teacher representatives on committees and boards. Most of the areas principals mentioned, where they include teachers as leaders, are not generally considered to be leadership roles in literature. Perhaps the teachers' perceptions of leadership roles were directed at a different view of teacher leadership as survey results from them were positive. More opportunities for teacher leadership could be opened up in secondary schools by motivating and valuing their engagement in different tasks, especially their representative roles.

Appreciation of new ideas is a way to motivate teachers to engage in tasks. Leaders should acknowledge teachers' achievements, be aware of their job interests, show appreciation of their ideas and provide opportunities for their professional development as these motivate them to participate more fully in the life of the school (Brundrett, 2010). One principal of this study made it clear that he welcomed ground-breaking ideas from teachers which helped him to develop the teaching and learning environment of the school. This is supported by the survey results from teachers. For instance, sometimes teachers are interested in using modern technology in teaching and learning while principals lack such knowledge and expertise. Though teachers reported in the survey that government resources are not properly directed to the most needed areas for school improvement, the principals indicated

that they take the necessary steps for structural change to implement teachers' ideas. Principals' steps can facilitate professional development and learning that fosters teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Rutherford, 2006). As a result, opportunities to involve teachers more can be created and teachers can be encouraged to become involved in various tasks themselves that benefit the schools.

Effective leaders work as facilitators for teachers and thus empower them by delegating tasks along with decision-making (Duignan & Macpherson, 1992). Principals in Bangladesh are able to provide opportunities for teachers to be involved in decision-making with the aim of school improvement. If principals promote teacher participation in decision-making, teachers are comfortable in suggesting ideas and solutions for issues in the schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). It is important to note that most of the principals of this study engage teachers in decision-making. In contrast, teachers report in the survey that they cannot actively participate in instructional decision-making, which seems contradictory. It is apparent that senior teachers have more scope to participate in leadership than do junior teachers. In Bangladesh, seniority in teaching is considered based on teaching experience and age. The principals consider that senior teachers have stronger decision-making abilities than juniors because of their experience and expertise. Supporting that, Dinham (2007) suggests effective principals involve teachers in decision-making taking into account the teachers' expertise areas, professional capacities and strategies.

The development of schools can be influenced when teachers are participants in the decision-making process (Rutherford, 2006; Smylie, 1995). One principal argued that she involved

juniors, even new teachers, who are capable of doing the job. The principals are also in favour of involving teachers in decision-making so that they can discuss and use their ideas. According to them, teachers enjoy freedom in decision-making. When teachers have the opportunity to practise some authority and leadership, they can develop their teaching skills and strategies for teaching and learning improvement (Spillane & Seashore-Luis, 2002). From the teachers' survey it can be seen that principals encourage teachers to be involved in leadership tasks and provide opportunities for that. This finding indicates that teachers get opportunities to be involved in leadership tasks but it is difficult to draw the line as to what extent they enjoy freedom in their job when principals must decide most things to comply with traditional regulations.

To be leaders, teachers need courage and belief in their leadership. Rutherford (2006) explains that teachers become leaders when they "intentionally transfer knowledge that influences one's ability to meet educational objectives" (p. 4). Not all the teachers will be interested in leadership. It depends on the perspectives of their lives. Teachers who are primarily interested in teaching may want to provide leadership and in contrast teachers who consider teaching as secondary to other life obligations, may not be interested in leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). It is evident in this study that teachers are interested in leadership but the number varies according to the school. One principal implies that few teachers are interested in leadership, while another principal believes that many are interested.

Principals need to understand that all teachers of a school are not interested in leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). One principal thinks that all of her teachers want to become leaders to be on different committees. This raises the question as to why they would all be interested. From my experience, teachers are interested in these positions as they include the attractions of power and money. This notion cannot be good for the secondary schools in Bangladesh because it encourages teachers to practise unethical conduct rather than undergo professional development. Professional learning programmes for teachers can be helpful for preparing future leaders and can change their motivation for engaging in and developing schools.

Professional learning can develop teachers' quality of leadership and pedagogy. Studies indicate that the development of teacher leadership can contribute to school success (Day & Harris, 2003; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). One principal explained that he arranged three types of training for teachers' development as: elementary training, in-house training and expert training. Rutherford (2006) realises the necessity of training as “. . . delivering professional development sessions provides teachers with the opportunity to intentionally influence the capacity of their colleagues to meet educational objectives” (p. 69). According to the principal, elementary training is compulsory for new teachers to let them know the rules, regulations and teaching and learning environment of the school. In-house training is arranged by the teachers who have had training in Bangladesh or abroad, from outside the school. Recognising the growing commitment to in-house training (Brundrett, 2010), the principal organised this training to introduce new ideas to all teachers. Expert training is arranged by guest teachers and speakers, those who are well known in education in

Bangladesh. Through this training, teachers can be informed about current knowledge of teaching and learning and can implement it successfully in their schools.

Many research studies indicate that locally developed training is more effective and provides growth opportunities for teacher leadership (Klinger, 2004; Nord Petzko, 2004). The teachers' survey indicated that the teachers in this study were given opportunities for improving their leadership but sometimes the lack of time and resources held them back from contributing to the school. Some principals generally do not want to train teachers because it causes disruption to classroom activities. Research studies strongly recommend teachers' training (Klinger, 2004; Rutherford, 2006), so not wanting it due to disruption of the teaching programme indicates a lack of knowledge by principals about the value of in-service professional development.

It seems clear that principals define teacher leadership as confined to the classroom activities. Although some opportunity for formal teacher leadership is available in secondary schools, informal teacher leadership practices rarely happen. In Bangladesh, some principals provide opportunities for teacher leadership while some other schools lack that, perhaps because of traditional thinking that only principals are involved in leadership. It is also apparent that teachers are interested in taking responsibilities for developing their leadership, which would be more fruitful if they had the necessary time and resources in schools.

Professional learning and training of principals

The principals described how they learned about leadership. Most of them revealed that they learned on-the-job through practical experience in their leadership positions. As Southworth (2010) said, “They learn to lead through their practice of leadership and from watching others exercise of leadership, as well as by seeing and hearing what followers think of such practices” (p. 187). The principals discussed that not only the position of principal helped them but also other job experiences enhanced them as effective leaders. One principal who was in the Bangladesh Army had experience in different positions of several organisations there. He has learned leadership from his experience in the Army and now implements his leadership knowledge in his school. His school is doing tremendously well in public examination results.

One question is worth asking here. How does the Army leadership experience enable him to do better than most other principals? The answer could be supported by what Southworth (2010) argued, “. . . placement, both short and longer term, being used to supplement leaders’ learning and growth by extending knowledge of other settings: in the school where they already work; in other schools; and in other organizations” (p. 187). Other principals imply that they played different leadership roles such as a psychologist, a mother, and a class teacher which helped them to become leaders. Duke argues, “Their development is a more involved and incremental process, beginning as early as their own schooling and extending through their first years on the job as leaders” (as cited in Barnett & O’Mahony, 2008, p. 232). Though they have fine reputations for successful leadership in these schools, this does not represent the more common school leadership scenario in Bangladesh.

Little attention has been placed on determining leadership development requirements of principals in Bangladesh. It is apparent from the findings of this study that no professional learning programme on school leadership is available in Bangladesh. Two principals received management training on the job from the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) which focused on school management. While one principal got training from the Army, another principal did not get any training on leadership. Although principals experience workshops and seminars on school leadership, the picture of professional leadership learning in Bangladesh can be inferred from this sample. To be a principal, teaching experience for several years rather than any leadership degree is the norm, which varies in government and private schools. While private schools require twelve years experience, the government schools ask for only four years.

The principals urged that professional leadership programmes for principals need to be developed as well as leadership programmes for others in their schools. No professional leadership degree is necessary to be a principal of government or private schools except a Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) in Bangladesh secondary schools. B.Ed is a one year teaching degree which is designed to improve teaching and learning for school teachers or for becoming a teacher. Even the national education policy of Bangladesh in 2010 suggests training for teachers to improve their pedagogy without proposing any leadership programme for principals' development in secondary schools (MoE, BD, 2010). A recommendation from this study is that the government should introduce school leadership programmes immediately to develop secondary education in Bangladesh. Cranston, Ehrich and Billot (2003) advocate for professional training programmes for principals to make them able to

meet the changing challenges in their daily work. Significantly, one principal put importance on the implementation of the learning from the training. She indicated in her interview how sometimes principals receive training but they appear not motivated enough to face the challenges of applying it in their schools. As a result expected outcomes do not occur in secondary schools of Bangladesh.

As UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong and other developed countries have distinct models of leadership professional learning to prepare their principals (Caldwell, Calnin & Cahill, 2003; Daresh & Male, 2000), how can principals be good leaders in Bangladesh without any formal leadership programme? The Bangladesh government has started the journey to develop secondary school leadership. One principal received professional leadership training from the Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) which is an initiative for secondary school leadership in Bangladesh. In the modern competitive world of education, more professional learning programmes on principal leadership as an ongoing process is needed for effective and sustainable development of secondary schools.

Though the principals develop their leadership skills through experience, an extension of their theoretical knowledge could be harnessed to perform more effectively in more complex environments (Cardno & Fitzgerald, 2005). Experience greatly enhances leadership when principals add their theoretical knowledge of leadership to it (Southworth, 2010). Experience can also be extended by learning from the experiences of others. Leadership programmes in New Zealand allow principals to appreciate the point of view of others and to develop a strong learning environment in schools (Ministry of Education, NZ, 2011). It is clear that there

is an imperative to develop and implement professional leadership programmes if the leadership of secondary schools in Bangladesh is to improve. Such programmes could be based on understanding of educational leadership approaches such as distributed leadership rather than focusing on administration and management skills. They would enhance the principal leadership through a modern focus and consequently enable teachers to influence student outcomes more positively.

Challenges for school leadership

Successful leaders are able to identify and overcome challenges to make their schools effective. They need to be able to recognise problems, explore options and develop innovative solutions to move towards school excellence. Principals play their role in solving challenges that come from outside the school in conjunction with people such as administrative staff, parents, community members, other external forces and special interest groups (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Principals are struggling with inadequate physical facilities. Most of them have a large number of students, many more than their allocated seats. While the standard teacher-student ratio in secondary schools is expected to be 1:30 in the National Education Policy of Bangladesh in 2010, at present it is more than double that (MoE, BD, 2011). Schools cannot control the ratio because most of the children want to get admission into such schools and the number of teachers is not allocated on an enrolment basis. Lack of better schools cause such schools to take more students, then teachers cannot take adequate care of their students. Some schools have different campuses which cause time-consuming decision-making in consulting across all of them. Lack of teaching aids is also

identified as a constraint on school development. All these challenges enlarge the obstacles to developing effective secondary schools.

One principal indicated a challenge to teacher recruitment, when teachers are recommended to be recruited even when they might not be qualified or have good qualities to be teachers. Similar things happen in student admission. The principal calls it *Tadbeer* in Bengali. The recommendations come mainly from people who are powerful politically or financially. These persons are so powerful the principals cannot ignore their request and sometimes they have to negotiate with them. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) support negotiation to overcome leadership challenges within larger school systems. My experience indicates that if a request does not work, these persons sometimes apply their political power so that they can fulfil their unethical demands.

Another challenge for secondary education is outdated educational rules and regulations. The regulations in education have not changed much since the freedom of Bangladesh in 1971. Along with this, secondary education is administered by bureaucrats who come in this sector from other civil services of Bangladesh government. Secondary schools face the challenge of insufficient competent educational administrators (Rahman et al., 2010). These bureaucrats rarely have education degrees or practical experience in education. Changing of the rules and regulations in secondary education has become urgent; policy makers and bureaucrats from different fields stand as barriers to these changes happening.

The principals also revealed a lack of skilled teachers. Sometimes teachers and staff are not skilled enough to do the job. This reveals a need for ongoing professional learning for teachers. The need for more facilities for teachers' collaboration in schools has also been identified. They note that if teachers' seating arrangement is organised according to subject departments, shared rooms could be helpful for their professional learning. Structures and support systems can facilitate leadership if they create opportunities for teachers to interact with each other (Camburn et al., 2003). Collaborative learning and cooperating with others can be enhanced by participating in 'teacher talk' professional dialogue which may lead to improvement in teaching and learning. Improvement will not occur until teachers take responsibility for their own learning as well as responsibility for their colleagues (Elmore, 2000a). The improvement also depends on creating opportunities for teachers to cooperate and collaborate with their colleagues (Camburn et al., 2003). The principals try to provide facilities for teachers and tend to overcome challenges though they have limited finances and resources. Such are the political, economical, social and other leadership challenges in operating secondary schools of Bangladesh.

It is evident in many studies that principals act as stimulators and problem solvers for schools (Harris et al., 2003). Traditionally, secondary school principals in Bangladesh have to address political and socio-economic problems along with the internal issues of the school. Though there is no relation to political parties regarding school administration, principals cannot work beyond the boundaries of politics. In most cases, the local MP (Member of Parliament) or his/her representative becomes the chairman of the SMC or GB of a school according to the

rules. In addition, money and power play a role in being elected or selected members for these committees.

Political involvement in school development can be seen in a negative way as Deal (2007) argues that political engagement in schools management is seen as manipulative, dishonest and destructive. Although the purpose of SMC and GB is to develop the schools, if a person on this committee is interested in exercising power for self interest, the development or new initiative might not happen. The principals often have to negotiate with power rather than work according to the rules in case of recommendation. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) imply that principals of successful schools “develop liaisons with powerful individuals to diminish these barriers in schools” (p. 97). It was evident that solving all problems in time by the government is difficult since secondary education is administered by a central system. As a result, the principals develop solutions in their own way relating it to their contextual environment. For example, one principal has made it clear that political or any other recommendations do not carry weight in his school since he works according to the rules and regulations. But, this does mean that all secondary school principals are able to do work according to the rules while resisting political pressures.

This discussion reveals that principals face the challenge of unauthorised power practices from external sources which interfere with their leadership vision and goals. They also lack physical facilities and staff expertise that hinder or reduce school improvement. Due to the bureaucratic administrative system in secondary education in Bangladesh, the resources are not allocated to what could be the vital areas for learning improvement in schools. If some of

the authority to make decisions were transferred to the principals so they could self-manage the operation of their schools, the schools might be able to reach their goals in a shorter time.

Implications for practice

The findings of this study suggest several implications for school leadership practice in supporting development of effective school leaders. One is that the development and implementation of professional leadership learning programmes are essential for principals. These could be designed to develop their theoretical and practical knowledge. Principals of successful schools have adequate experiential knowledge in operating schools but they lack the theoretical knowledge about different approaches and perspectives of school leadership. Their desire to delegate tasks signifies that they believe it is important in improving teaching and learning as well as building their school culture. This is an example of pedagogical leadership. Based on the findings, a comprehensive leadership development programme could be introduced for all principals in relation to their own contexts and needs.

However, if the government of Bangladesh is to begin this process it should be supported by research. Though the schools in this study have high achievement in public examinations, most secondary schools face challenges to improve their results in public examinations. These principals, along with other successful principals, can be role models for other principals in challenging schools and government can engage these principals in leadership learning programmes. It would be better if the education policy in Bangladesh provided mandatory professional leadership programmes for beginning principals of secondary schools. Although the national education policy of 2010 suggests subject based training for teachers to develop

their pedagogy, there is no initiative proposed for improving principal leadership in secondary schools in this report.

This study also suggests that it is essential for principals to have more autonomy in their decision-making. Though the bureaucratic administrative system helps principals to make their decisions legitimate and concrete, often it prevents them from making beneficial decisions in time for the development of their schools. To resolve this issue, the Ministry of Education could give them broader guidelines in the operation of secondary schools but principals could have the freedom in making the decisions they consider are needed for school improvement. The findings from this study suggest that secondary schools should avoid unnecessary involvement of politics and power in decision-making in different aspects such as teacher recruitment and student admission. But, the government advocates that political leaders should be engaged in secondary schools management since they are active members of society. Indeed, the elected political leaders are representative of a society and should be involved in the wellbeing of a school; but in many cases they do not practise their power in a proactive way. For this reason, the policy makers should sort out a way that politicians can play positive roles in secondary schools' development.

Promoting the idea of teachers as leaders is another recommendation of this study. Although the principals used teachers' skills to develop their schools, they had a narrow concept of how teachers could take on leadership roles. While successful principals have the traditional concept of teacher leadership confined it in classroom activities, the views of teacher leadership in Bangladesh can be easily understood. The survey suggests that adequate time in

daily and weekly routines and resources for teaching are essential for teachers to develop teacher leadership in secondary schools. The Bangladesh government could evaluate the needs for resources in schools and allocate them based on the needs. If all principals are able to provide the opportunity to develop and utilise teacher leadership, the schools are likely to flourish.

Principals require theoretical and practical knowledge to develop teacher leadership. The need for professional leadership programmes is urgent and if leadership programmes are associated with the concept of teacher leadership, then it might be easy for policy makers to introduce rapidly the concept of teacher leadership. Recognising the necessity, the government has initiated leadership training programme for principals of secondary schools through TQI-SEP project. In this thesis, there was not enough scope to examine the curriculum of the leadership programme since it has been developed after the beginning of my study. It is hoped the programme is able to fulfil the emergent requirements to train an effective principal in Bangladesh secondary schools.

Recommendations for future research

The findings of this study indicate what the principals know about school leadership and how they interpret and practise leadership in their schools. They provide an insight into the multiple dimensions of distributed leadership and identify key challenges for school leadership in the Bangladesh context. While considering the development and practice of school leadership in different countries, there is a relative lack of research on school leadership in Bangladesh. When conducting my study on secondary school leadership, I could

not find any published research on school leadership in Bangladesh. As a result, many questions remain unanswered after this study due to its limited size and scope. Further research on the following issues of school leadership of Bangladesh would help to develop the ideas presented here:

- A significant future research agenda could focus on school leadership and how principals of secondary schools are effective; how they make their schools successful without any professional leadership programme. What would enhance their leadership? How could this be translated into effective leadership programmes? The findings from such studies could enhance the practice of leadership in Bangladesh secondary schools.
- The impact of top-down bureaucratic administration on secondary school leadership in Bangladesh could be an important area for future research. That research might enrich the understanding of the constraints of the bureaucratic systems on educational leadership and indicate alternative ways to operate.
- The concepts of teacher leadership need to be examined further in order to develop multiple opportunities for teacher leadership in Bangladesh secondary schools. Study on how teachers perceive the leadership of their principals may inform the practise of leadership in secondary schools. The findings could lead to enhancing the skills of teachers in teaching and learning through development of distributed leadership in secondary schools.

- Another important area for future research would be to identify the challenges of political and socio-cultural constraints on improvement of teaching and learning. This research might indicate where changes should be made so schools can be managed more equitably.
- Research of a recently introduced intervention leadership programme could be conducted to explore the aptness of its content and implications for implementation in educational leadership. This research could help policy makers change or modify this programme or introduce new leadership programmes for secondary school principals.

Conclusion

The international studies on school leadership provide educators with a wide picture of effective school leadership in various settings. Although current research gives a broad description of school leadership internationally, to date there has been little research on leadership in Bangladesh secondary schools. In Bangladesh, where leadership is understood as the administrative or management job of principals, it is now vital to understand how school leadership can be developed so that schools can improve and be more effective. Without effective leadership in schools, it is difficult for schools to attain the learning outcomes to which principals and policy makers aspire.

It is evident that Bangladesh has made significant progress in some aspects of secondary education such as raising the number of enrolments, providing more schools and teachers,

gender equity in access to education, and revision of the curriculum. But, it is now recognised that there is urgency to improve the quality of educational outcomes for students. It is clear that empirical research studies have found that school development depends on the quality of principal leadership. With support from the government, principals can create and control the journey to success of their own schools. But they still face many challenges along the path of continuous improvement and one of those is to clarify and act on their understandings of school leadership. To become purposeful in their leadership activities from a basis of theory and research is another challenge. The Bangladesh government has taken initial steps to enrich the leadership of secondary schools by introducing a leadership programme for secondary school principals. There is a need for this to be extended and developed.

Successful principals use pedagogical leadership effectively though that may be without adequate theoretical knowledge. Pedagogical leadership is directly concerned with teaching and learning improvement; in contrast distributed leadership leads to enhancement of teaching and learning by empowering all teachers in the schools to take responsibilities, change and grow. At present distributed leadership is seen as little more than delegating tasks to teachers so principals need to know that it is also about building leadership capacity throughout their schools. Principals should move away from positional leadership to a more distributed leadership approach, to utilise the expertise of the teachers in the schools in a collaborative way thereby building capacity for further success. This is the time to introduce this leadership model to quickly achieve a remarkable improvement in secondary education of Bangladesh.

This study provides understanding of the leadership of principals and their leadership practices in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Though the study provides data from only four secondary schools judged to be successful schools, I have linked my findings with international leadership literature. I believe that as a novice researcher in the field of school leadership, I have been helped by this new knowledge about the perceptions of four school principals and some teachers to understand how their beliefs impact on their leadership practices. In particular the findings indicate that distributing leadership responsibilities contributes to making their schools effective. Since distributed leadership has the potential to improve teaching and learning in schools, and requires a shift in power and resources, principals may be interested in this type of model. This study may encourage principals of Bangladesh to examine their leadership practices and consider new ways to lead their schools to success. Education policy makers may be influenced by this study to think creatively about how to improve secondary school leadership in Bangladesh.

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Appendix A: Distributed Leadership Questionnaire

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Your responses are voluntary, confidential and greatly appreciated. No individual will be identified in any reports.

Background Information

1. **What is your primary role at this school?** Mark (✓) ONE box.

Principal

Classroom Teacher

2. **How many years have you been working in this school including the current school year?** (Print number of years in boxes using only whole numbers.) Example: If this is your first year in this school, write 01. If this is your tenth year at this school, write 10.

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PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to the following statements in terms of how frequently each statement is descriptive of your school. Please tick (✓) the appropriate number for each item.

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The school has clearly written vision and mission statements.					
2. Teachers understand and support a common mission for the school and can describe it clearly.					
3. If parents are asked to describe the school's mission, most will be able to describe the mission clearly.					
4. If students are asked to describe the schools' mission, most will be able to describe it clearly.					
5. School goals are aligned with the national educational statement.					
6. The school uses a school improvement plan as a basis for progress.					
7. Teachers and administrators collectively establish school goals and revise goals annually.					
8. Teachers share accountability for students' academic performance.					
9. Government resources are directed to those areas in which student learning needs to improve most.					
10. The school is a learning community that continually improves its effectiveness, learning from both successes and failures.					
11. There is a high level of mutual respect and trust among the teachers.					
12. There is mutual respect and trust between school head and the teachers.					
13. The school administrators (Head & Assistant Head) welcome teachers' input on issues related to instruction and improving student performance.					

14. The school supports using new instructional ideas and innovations.					
15. The school's daily and weekly schedules provide time for teachers to collaborate on instructional issues.					
16. The school clearly communicates the 'chain of contact' between home and school so parents know whom to contact when they have questions and concerns.					
17. School teachers and parents agree on the most effective roles parents can play as partners in their child's education.					
18. The school makes available a variety of data (e.g. school performance) for teachers to use to improve student achievement.					
19. Decisions to change instructional programs are based on assessment data.					
20. There is a formal structure in place in the school (academic council) to provide teachers opportunities to participate in school level instructional decision making.					
21. The principal actively encourages teachers to participate.					
22. The school provides teachers with professional development aligned with the school's mission and goals.					
23. The principal actively participates in his or her own professional development activities to improve leadership in the school.					
24. My principal and I jointly develop my annual professional development plan.					
25. My professional development plan includes activities that are based on my individual professional needs and school needs.					
26. Teachers actively participate in instructional decision making.					

27. The principal is knowledgeable about current instructional issues.					
28. My principal's practices are consistent with his or her words.					
29. Informal school leaders play an important role in the school in improving the performance of professionals and the achievement of students.					
30. The school has expanded its capacity by providing professional staff formal opportunities to take on leadership roles.					
31. Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient school time to permit them to make meaningful contributions to school.					
32. Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient resources to be able to make meaningful contributions to the school.					
33. Expert teachers fill most leadership roles in the school.					
34. New teachers are provided opportunities to fill some school leadership roles					
35. Teachers are interested in participating in school leadership roles.					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix B: Permission for use of Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS)

From: Jacobson, Larry [Larry.Jacobson@ct.gov]

Wednesday, 30 June 2010 10:41 p.m.

To: Abu Salahuddin

Abu,

On behalf of the Connecticut State Department of Education you are authorized to make use of the Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale for purposes of your research.

If possible, I would appreciate any research summary or findings at the conclusion of your thesis.

Best regards

Larry Jacobson, Ph.D.

Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification

Connecticut State Department of Education

Off. Ph. 860-713-6819

Fax: 860-713-702

Appendix C: Permission from the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Shikkha Bhaban, Dhaka-1000

The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC)
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

Subject: Permission for the Bangladeshi Teacher Educators studying for Master of Education at the University of Canterbury to conduct research on Bangladesh Education.

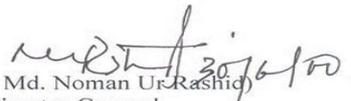
Dear Sir/Madam

The following 14 Bangladeshi Teacher Educators studying Master of Education at the University of Canterbury are hereby given permission to conduct research in the education sector of Bangladesh as a part of their Master of Education program.

Sl.No	Name and Designation
1	Mollah Mohammed Haroon- Ar-Rasheed, OSD (Lecturer, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2	Tania Afreen Khan, OSD (Lecturer, Guidance & Counselling), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
3	Niger Sultana, OSD (Lecturer, Bangla), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
4	Md. Ariful Haq Kabir (Lecturer, Sociology), IER, Dhaka University (on Education Leave)
5	Mohammad Ali, OSD (Assistant Professor, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
6	Md. Ahasanul Arefin Chowdhury, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
7	Md. Safayet Alam, OSD (Assistant Professor, Physics), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
8	Nazma Purvin, OSD (Lecturer, Mental Hygiene), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
9	Muhammed Mahbubur Rahman, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
10	Abu Nayeem Mohammad Salauddin (Lecturer, Educational Administration), , IER, Dhaka University (on Education Leave)
11	Ranjit Podder, OSD (Assistant Professor, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
12	Sanjoy Kumar Mazumder, OSD (Lecturer, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
13	Mst. Shaila Banu, OSD (Lecturer, Physics), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
14	Sheikh Mohammad Ali, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh

It will be ensured that the researchers have their consent of participation before they start their research; guarantee confidentiality of data and individuals; avoid unnecessary deception; pose no risk to any participants; and their behaviour consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

If any complications arise at any stage of the research, the ERHEC is advised to contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email:nazrul@tqi-sep.org).

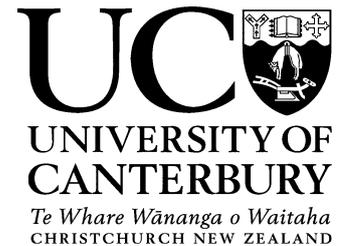

(Professor Md. Noman Ur Rashid)
Director General

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Shikkha Bhaban. Dhaka-1000

Telephone: +64211046971, +8801914959898

Email: ans49@uclive.ac.nz, sripon07@yahoo.com

Date:



Appendix D: Consent Form for the Principals

Project: Perceptions of Effective Leadership in Bangladesh Secondary Schools: Moving towards Distributed Leadership?

Consent Form for Principals

I have been given a full explanation of the project and have been given an opportunity to collect data about the project. I understand what will be required of me and of my teachers if I allow the researcher to conduct the study here in my school. I also know that the participation of me and the teachers is voluntary and we can withdraw ourselves from the research at any stage without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions provided by me and my colleagues will be kept confidential to the researcher in a way that I, my school and colleagues will not be identified in any published and reported writing; and data collected for this study will be kept under lock and key in a secured place.

I understand that I will be sent a report on the findings of the study to my e-mail/postal address given below. If I require further information, I can contact the researcher Mr Abu Salahuddin; and if I have any complaints, I can contact Mr Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, College of Education, University of Canterbury (Phone: +64033458312, email: missy.morton@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I agree this research to be conducted in my school.

Name :

Date :

Signature :

Cell/ Phone Number :

Email/Postal Address : Please return this completed consent form to Mr. Abu Salahuddin in the envelope provided by 01/12/2010.

Telephone: +64211046971, +8801914959898

Email: ans49@uclive.ac.nz, sripon07@yahoo.com

Date:



Appendix E: Consent Form for the Teachers

Project: Perceptions of Effective Leadership in Bangladesh Secondary Schools: Moving towards Distributed Leadership?

Consent Form for the Teachers

I have been given a full explanation of the project and have been given an opportunity to collect information about it. I understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in the project and I also know that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw myself at any stage of the research without any penalty.

I understand that any information I will provide, will be kept confidential to the researcher and to the people directly related to the study in a way that I will not be identified in any published and reported writing; and data collected for this study will be kept under lock and key in a secured place.

I understand that I will be sent a report on the findings of the study to my e-mail/postal address given below. If I require further information, I can contact the researcher, Mr Abu Salahuddin, and if I have any complaints, I can contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, College of Education, University of Canterbury (Phone: +64033458312, email: missy.morton@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I agree to take part in this research project.

Name :

Signature & Date :

Cell/ Phone Number :

Email/ Postal Address :

Please return this completed consent form to Mr. Abu Salahuddin in the envelop provided by 10/12/2010.

Telephone: +64 211046971, +8801914959898
E mail: ans49@uclive.ac.nz, sripon07@yahoo.com
Date:



Appendix F: A letter of Information to the Principals

Project: Perceptions of Effective Leadership in Bangladesh Secondary Schools: Moving towards Distributed Leadership?

A letter of Information to the Principals

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Abu Salahuddin (Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh), currently studying Master of Education, at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. I am undertaking this thesis project as part of my Master of Education degree. I will be working under the supervision of Dr Lindsey Conner, Associate Professor and Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor; Dr Barry Brooker, Associate Dean, Primary; and Jan Daley, Senior Lecturer, Educational Leadership Qualifications, College of Education, University of Canterbury.

I am carrying out this study to explore how head teachers interpret leadership and the extent to which they use distributed leadership activities to make their school effective. I would like to work in your school because of its reputation as having experienced and skilled teaching staff, comparatively better results in the SSC examinations, and its diverse leadership approaches.

I am writing to you to request your permission to work with you and some of the teachers in your school for several aspect of my research. With your permission, I would like to conduct a semi-structured interview with you for around 30-45 minutes.

You will be provided with the interview questions beforehand so that you have time to think about the topic. I could hold a preliminary discussion with you to clarify everything and answer questions, if you have any.

I also ask that you and five teachers from your school complete a survey on distributed leadership. If you and your teachers are in agreement, you will fill out the questionnaire at the school and I will collect them soon after that.

Any information that you or your teachers provide, will be kept confidential to me and to the people directly related to the study in a way that will not identify the participants in any published and reported writing; and data collected for this study will be kept under lock and key in a secured place for five years after the completion of the study.

If you find this project satisfactory and agree for you and your teachers to participate, please contact me by my email or phone. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms will be given to the school, yourself and any teachers involved. Above all, participation in the project is voluntary and any participant can withdraw him/herself if any question arises regarding the ethical issues.

Therefore, I am seeking your approval to conduct the research in your school, and I need your help to nominate at least five teachers from your school for the purpose of the study.

If you have any complaints about the research process, you may contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org); or Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, College of Education, University of Canterbury (Phone: +64033458312, email: missy.morton@canterbury.ac.nz).

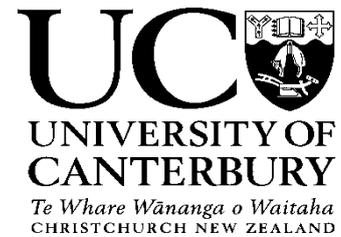
With Kind Regards,

Abu Salahuddin

Telephone: +64 211046971, +8801914959898

E Mail: ans49@uclive.ac.nz, sripon07@yahoo.com

Date:



Appendix G: A letter of Information to the Teachers

Project: Perceptions of Effective Leadership in Bangladesh Secondary Schools: Moving towards Distributed Leadership?

A letter of Information to the teachers

Dear Teacher,

I am Abu Salahuddin (Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh), currently studying Master of Education, at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, undertaking this thesis as part of my Master of Education degree. I will be working under the supervision of Dr Lindsey Conner, Associate Professor and Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor; and Dr Barry Brooker, Associate Dean, Primary; and Jan Daley, Senior Lecturer, Educational Leadership Qualifications, College of Education, University of Canterbury.

I am carrying out this study to explore how you interpret leadership and the extent that distributed leadership activities are used in your school.

If you agree to participate in this study, I would like you to fill in a questionnaire which rates your perception about distributed leadership in your school. It should take you only about 15-20 minutes to complete. No instructional time will be used and you can complete this at your school. I will collect the survey from you when you have completed it on the same day.

If you find this project satisfactory and are willing to participate, please let your head teacher know. I am interested to work with you because of your experience, skill, dedication, as well as your aim to

improve the school performance. I hope that the study will benefit you by enriching your personal reflection of leadership at your school. In addition, national and international school leadership will be benefited from your rich experiences.

Any information that you provide, will be kept confidential to the researcher and to the people directly related to the study in a way that you will not be identified in any published and reported writing; and data collected for this study will be kept under lock and key in a secured place for five years after the completion of the study. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, no personal information will be collected and pseudonyms will be used in all reporting of the project.

Participation in the project is voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw yourself at any stage of the study. If you have any complaints about the research process, you may contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org); or Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, College of Education, University of Canterbury (Phone: +64033458312, email: missy.morton@canterbury.ac.nz).

Thank you for your participation. It is greatly appreciated!

With Kind Regards,

Abu Salahuddin