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ABSTRACT

One of the most powerful foundations for education is having a focused personal vision. It provides direction and gives meaning to our work. All leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision but few of them have the ability to transform their visions into reality. The question arises here that what are the sources which influence educational leaders to develop their focused personal visions. Thus, this study sought to explore the sources which influence educational leaders to develop their focused personal visions. The study employed comparative case study approach. Information was gathered through semi structured interviews, observations and document analysis. Two educational leaders of different organizations in Karachi were the primary research participants.

Their personal visions were to enhance the capacities of teachers and teacher education programme. The findings of the study suggested that personal values, interests, needs and beliefs
influenced both educational leaders to develop their focused personal visions. Religious, social and cultural sources were found the prominent factors of both educational leaders' personal visions. Both the educational leaders developed their own educational organizations to enact their personal visions.

Key words: Personal vision; education leaders

1. INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, vision is a desire that people contain within themselves. However, from educational point of view some authors believe that it is one of the powerful foundations in educational reforms. For example, it provides right direction, gives meaning to our work and guidance to our lives. It is shining light in the darkness towards which we find and illuminate our ways. All leaders have the capacity to create a realistic, credible and compelling vision; but few of them have the ability to transform their visions into reality. The question arises here, that what are the sources, which influence educational leaders to develop their focused personal visions. There has been a lot of work on vision in the west but there is dearth of such studies to explore the sources of focused personal visions in developing countries like Pakistan. Thus, this study aimed to explore and understand the sources which influence educational leaders to develop their focused personal visions.

2. BACKGROUND

Voyage of a thousand miles begins with a single step. It is important that step is in the right direction. Mahtsham (2007) argues that vision is the first step in the process of any planning. Vision has been defined in a variety of ways including mental models (Burchard, 2009; Senge, 1994), an image of the future (Daft, 2002; Senge, 1994), and a way to solve problems (Schien, 2004). The common theme exist among all literature is, a vision is an image of future what he/she desire to be, and which they have power to bring into reality (O'Brien & Meadows, 2001). However, some authors viewed that vision is not only a mental image or image of desired future; it also provides direction, purpose and the meaning to transform the desired future into a reality. Generally, it is observed that many students cannot develop their focused personal visions for their professional careers, what they want to become eventually in five, ten or fifteen years in future. As a result, they cannot envision a holistic picture of their career. A person without a clear vision cannot proceed towards the right direction (Mohtsham, 2007). In some cases, teachers do not help students in developing their focused personal visions because teachers are not well oriented with the importance of vision development. Leithwood and Janti (1997) argue that among many attributes of leaders, vision building is the most often-cited attribute. This shows that vision development is an important ingredient of leadership practices. Vision is no doubt an important part of leadership because it reflects the needs, interests, values and beliefs of an individual (Sergiovanni, 1990 as cited in Barnett & McCorkick, 2002). Many leaders believe that vision development is a straightforward task of articulating a statement of beliefs and then implementing it. However, some studies suggest

that vision is more of an evolutionary process than a one-time event, a process that requires continuous reflection, action and re-evaluation (Hoyle, 2006). Khaki (2005) argues that vision is developed by internal and external factors such as beliefs, behavior and values which need to be studied. This study is focused to the following research questions.

1. How do personal visions of two educational leaders develop?
2. What are the similarities and differences in their sources of personal visions?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research paradigm is employed for the study and within the qualitative paradigm, case study method is chosen. It helped the researchers to carry out the research in a real context to understand the phenomenon in a better way (Gillham, 2000) as this research study also deals with the feelings, emotions, opinions, characteristics and behavior (Creswell, 2012) of educational leaders. More specifically, two cases are studied; the intention is to study the cases more closely as individuals about the sources of their personal visions in Karachi, Pakistan. In order to generate and collect the maximum data, purposeful sampling (Mangal & Mangal, 2013) is opted for the selection of the participants. To identify the participants of the study, a list of the attributes essential (Merriam, 2009) is created. It is intended that the participants should meet the following criteria:

1. The participants should have established their own educational organization.
2. They must occupy the top positions in the organization.
3. The participants should have been working in the organization for five years.

Multiple sources used for data collection, such as, semi-structured interviews, informal discussions, documents analysis and observations.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

a. MR. REHMAT'S SOURCES OF PERSONAL VISION

Mr. Rehmat was the first respondent; his vision includes enhancing the capacities of all in-service primary and secondary teachers. His vision also includes seeing an educated society in the country. Mr. Rehmat had been teaching for more than 30 years therefore he was aware of teachers' concerns. He was also very much concerned about teachers' status and teaching profession in Pakistan. He believed that in Pakistan, teaching is not an attractive profession. Similarly, he also believed that parents of the children and the administrators of different organizations have low opinion about the teachers. Keeping in view the circumstances, Mr. Rehmat thought to take some initiatives to improve the status of teachers in the society. He felt that teaching is a respectable and prophetic profession. His passion forced him to establish an organization and provide opportunities for teachers to develop their pedagogical skills and knowledge. Mr. Rehmat believed that teachers can bring a change in the society by improving the quality of education in schools. It is his hope that when teachers are developed, ultimately society will be educated and his vision is to see an educated society. He feels that teachers are the agents of change therefore there must be a collaborative effort to enhance the status of teachers in the society. Religious and spiritual inspirations emerged as one of the sources of Mr. Rehmat's personal vision. His faith to serve the under privileged people of the society and belongingness with Sufi (mysticism) community influenced him to initiate some steps for the betterment of the society. In this regard, he received enormous wisdom from his religious teachers who taught him. He feels that Moulana Romi and Quran and Islamic spirituality are huge sources for his wisdom and personal vision. His love and sincerity with the country, faith with soul and respect from society bounded Mr. Rehmat to serve the nation. In sum, values such as wisdom, passion, access, justice, compassion, courage, enjoyment, harmony, respect, empathy, appreciation, fairness, love, care, patriotism, generosity, optimism, trustworthiness, sense of human and sincere, beliefs and different educational exposures were the prominent sources of Mr. Rehmat's personal vision.

b. MR. NIAMAT'S SOURCES OF PERSONAL VISION

Mr. Niamat was the second respondent; his personal vision includes providing quality school systems for early childhood education. His vision also includes helping every school going children in getting education, which is accepted, effective and sustainable. Service to others is the foremost desire of Mr. Niamat's life. He feels that large number of populations is living under severe conditions, resulting many school-going-age children are out of schools. Parents cannot afford the expenses of their children to get education. He feels that only education can help people to improve their standard of life. Patriotic values also influenced Mr. Niamat to develop his personal vision. He believes that there is a dire need of improvement in early childhood education in Pakistan. He has focused on this area to

increase the access and quality in early childhood education. Mr. Niamat believed that a person should have a passionate vision to enact his or her dreams into reality. He felt that if a person does not have his own vision then he is being limited. Similarly, he shared that if a person does not have his own vision then he is consumed by others' vision. He feels that other people give you certain freedom, it is not a weakness it is a need because other organizations have their own agendas. They have to fulfill their own ambitions. Mr. Niamat argued that "if you want to actualize your own dream then you have to have your own soil". Mr. Niamat' vision was developed by inspirations and influences of great personalities. He feels that "few great personalities have done a marvelous job in their time therefore, I think that if people have done such great things in past why I cannot do now". Mr. Niamat is also inspired by different ideal personalities of the time and he would like to own some qualities of those personalities. In sum, various values such as service to others, self-exposure, encouragement, appreciation, commitment, dedication, determination, courtesy, humility, hope, optimism and love and his strong beliefs are the prominent sources of Mr. Niamat's personal vision.

5. DISCUSSION

Personal visions are no doubt an important part of leadership. The cases above indicated that Mr. Rehmat and Mr. Niamat have developed their personal visions to improve the knowledge, skills and attitude of teachers. Davies and Davies (2010) reported that what makes difference among leaders is the vision that must be clear, desirable and implemented by perusal commitment. The findings of the study revealed that there was not a single source which had influenced both the educational leaders to develop their personal visions rather there were multiple sources. In various research studies conducted over the past ten years in various contexts, leaders and others were asked to identify sources of personal visions. They pointed out that honesty, integrity, trust, passion, support, care, love and compassion are the essential sources of personal visions (Brown & Townsend, 1997; Sale, 1997; Swann, 1998). It seems that various sources influenced educational leaders to develop their personal visions. Mr. Rehmat and Mr. Niamat both having similar passion to serve others and it was the basic sources of their personal visions. Both the leaders served teachers as they were conducting trainings for teachers and head teachers. This shows that services to others are the fundamental values of both the education leaders. Burchard (2016) and Bossi (2008) stated that values are important in vision formation. Some of the leaders develop their personal visions after getting inspired by the role models. Similarly, both the educational leaders are influenced by few role models. They have received enormous wisdom and inspiration from role models. They believed that some great leaders have done a marvelous job and they are remembered in our history. Both the leaders wanted to have some qualities of their ideal leaders. Hoyle (2006) maintains that historians record the lives of extraordinary visionaries who inspired people during their lives and made lasting contributions. This seems that some of the educational leaders are influenced by role models and develop their focused personal visions.

The cases also reveal that there was also a difference in sources of personal visions between both the educational leaders. Mr. Rehmat was influenced by his belongingness with teaching profession for more than thirty years. He was well aware of the challenges faced by teachers in their schools, classrooms and society. He opened the organization only to improve the status of teachers by developing their skills, knowledge and attitude. Mr. Niamat on the other hand, claims that a large number of children in the country are out of schools. Similarly, he argued that even those who were enrolled in the schools were not nurturing properly. Therefore, he wanted to assist the teachers of early childhood by providing professional development opportunities.

Comparative Summary of the Sources of two Educational Leaders' Personal Visions

Mr. Rehmat	Mr. Niamat
Personal and professional profiles (Similarities)	
• Diverse working experiences • Educated and training abroad	• Diverse working experiences • Educated abroad
Personal and professional profiles (Differences)	
• High socio-economic background • Multiple educational exposures • Expertise in English Linguistic	• Low socio-economic background • Some educational exposures • Expertise in Child Psychology
Personal visions of educational leaders	
• Capacity Building of Primary and Secondary teachers • Wanted to see an educated society	• Capacity Building of Early Childhood Teachers • Support School Going Children
Sources of personal visions (Similarities)	
• Inspirations of role models • Patriotic values	• Inspirations of role models • Patriotic values

• Serve to the society	• Service to others
Sources of personal visions (Differences)	
• Passion with teaching profession • Religious inspirations • Educational exposures	• Compassion with children • Personal needs • Interest in the field

6. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that personal vision is an important component in the process of change (Boyd, 1992) which is practiced and demonstrated by both the leaders of the organizations. Numerous experts on leadership and personal development emphasize that it is personal vision which distinguishes among leaders. Sources may play an important role in personal vision development. Values, beliefs, needs, interest and educational exposures are the various sources of personal vision. Literature maintains that those who have strong sources, they developed their focused personal visions while some visionary leaders fail because their visions are not properly developed (Sergiovanni, 1990).

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