

## BARRIERS FACED BY FEMALE HEADS' IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Iram Shehzadi\*<sup>1</sup>, Dr Aabida Lateef<sup>2</sup>, Dr Nasrullah Khan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>\*1</sup>Lecturer Education Department University of Poonch Haveli Campus.

<sup>2,3</sup>Assistant Professor Education University of Poonch Haveli Campus AJK

### Corresponding Author: \*

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
15 August, 2024	15 September, 2024	30 September, 2024	14 October, 2024

### ABSTRACT

The study is conducted to analyze the leadership barriers faced by female teachers of secondary schools in District Haveli. The objectives of the study were: to identify personal barriers, social barriers of secondary schools in district Haveli, academic barriers, and management skills of female teachers. Universal random sampling technique was used to draw sample from the population. The participants of the study were all secondary schools' teachers and principals. Questionnaire and interviews were used as a data collection tool. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Major findings include; there is no child care facility available in the schools for newly parents. It was challenging for female teachers to keep balance between both home and school work. The study recommended developing flexible work policies that cater to the diverse requirements of teachers with families, offering alternatives such as telecommunicating and adaptable schedules. Schools should consider establishing on-site child care facilities to offer convenient and accessible care for the children of faculty, staff, and students.

**Keywords:** Female teachers' leadership, barriers, secondary schools.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, considerable efforts have been made to promote fairness and equality for all, particularly regarding the equitable treatment of boys and girls in schools. Despite progress, a persistent issue remains a lack of female leadership in secondary schools. Hacifazlıoğlu (2010) also highlighted additional hurdles such as adjusting to the work environment, managing internal and external institutional pressures, striking a balance between familial responsibilities and leadership roles, and cultivating effective interpersonal relationships, all of which pose further obstacles for women. As individuals strive for advancement within the education system, the proportion of women in leadership positions further diminishes. Nevertheless, some studies suggest that having more women in leadership roles can positively impact school performance (Kovaleva et al., 2023).

Leadership is the act of guiding and motivating individuals or groups to accomplish specific goals or

objectives. Educational leadership involves guiding educational institutions towards their objectives through adept management, visionary planning, and collaborative efforts. It includes deploying methods to enhance teaching and learning, cultivate a supportive school culture, and guarantee fair educational opportunities for every student. Educational leaders motivate and empower educators, students, and other stakeholders to strive for ongoing improvement and innovative approaches in educational endeavors (Smith & Smythe, 2018). Women leaders offer distinctive insights, communication methods, and collaborative strategies that help cultivate inclusive and empowering learning environments for both students and educators. Research in this field explores how gender influences leadership practices, the challenges female leaders face in overcoming obstacles and biases, and the importance of diverse representation in educational leadership to drive

positive transformation and innovation (Jones & Smith, 2020).

Leadership appointments frequently entail political maneuvering, whether explicit or implicit, requiring lobbying endeavors and the development of highly prominent public personas. This situation often puts women at a disadvantage, particularly those who lack access to influential networks and alliances due to their gender, domestic obligations, or societal norms regarding acceptable conduct.

Promoting female leadership in school management involves establishing connections between teachers and experienced individuals. In the ever-evolving educational sector, effective leaders embrace change, actively seek opportunities for improvement, and cultivate an atmosphere conducive to ongoing learning and growth. However, a significant challenge arises from the readiness of women themselves, as managerial positions require extra time and training, which may discourage them from actively seeking such opportunities. Studies show that women in leadership positions frequently face various challenges and difficulties (Hryniewicz & Vianna, 2018).

Effective management skills are essential for leading any educational institution and ensuring the success of all stakeholders involved. Clear and efficient communication plays a vital role for an educational leader in conveying their vision, expectations, and goals to teachers, staff, students, and parents. Active listening and articulate expression of ideas contribute to fostering a positive and collaborative environment. A competent educational leader is characterized by having a well-defined vision for the institution's future and the capability to formulate and implement strategic plans to realize that vision. This includes establishing goals, determining priorities, and coordinating efforts toward shared objectives. Administering an educational institution encompasses a myriad of responsibilities, ranging from class scheduling to event coordination. Proficient organizational skills are paramount for preserving efficiency, mitigating confusion, and guaranteeing seamless operations across all dimensions of the institution. Cultivating a unified team comprising teachers, staff, and administrators is imperative for fostering a conducive learning environment. Successful leadership entails instilling

motivation and inspiration in team members, acknowledging their competencies, and nurturing a spirit of collaboration. Educational leaders frequently encounter intricate decisions and challenges.

In secondary education, the representation of female leadership remains disproportionately low and is confronted by various obstacles globally, including within District Haveli. Despite ongoing initiatives to advance gender equality, female leaders encounter systemic hurdles that impede their effectiveness and hinder their professional advancement. The task at hand involves conducting a comprehensive analysis of the barriers impacting female leadership in the management of secondary schools identifying their root causes, and providing recommendations to eliminate these barriers.

## Objectives of Study

1. To identify social barriers faced by female teachers in managing secondary schools.
2. To find out the academic barriers faced by female teachers in managing schools
3. To provide recommendations for effective female school leadership.

## Research Questions

1. What are the social barriers faced by female teachers in managing secondary school?
2. What are the academic barriers faced by female teachers in managing school?
3. What recommendations can be made for effective female school leadership?

## Literature Review

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done, facilitating efforts to achieve shared goals. Educational leadership involves guiding institutions toward excellence through vision, collaboration, and strategic management. Principals, as school leaders, oversee academic and administrative affairs, focusing on improving education quality, especially in public primary schools (Nadeak & Juwita, 2020). In Pakistan, Shah (2016) identifies deep-rooted cultural norms and power dynamics as major barriers to women's leadership, reinforced by gender roles that favor men in leadership (Siddiqui, 2014). These

barriers result in fewer women in leadership roles, contributing to gender inequality in education (Raza & Malik, 2020).

While some women navigate these challenges successfully, many continue to face obstacles, including unequal resource distribution, marginalization in decision-making, and limited promotional opportunities (Ali et al., 2019).

Khaliq et al. (2017) highlighted the pivotal role of women's participation in the economic advancement of their nations. Women in leadership positions within educational institutions tend to prioritize setting clear objectives for school improvement and implementing strategies to strengthen pedagogical aspects. These efforts not only promote accountability but also improve the quality of teaching and administrative operations. The advancement of female leadership within schools and universities is noted to act as a driving force, motivating girls to actively participate in academic endeavors, complete their studies, and pursue secure professional careers (Main et al., 2022). Barriers to women's educational leadership include poor self-image, lack of aspiration and motivation, family and home responsibilities, working conditions, sex discrimination, lack of social support, and sex-role stereotyping, as well as inadequacies in preparation programs and curriculum materials (Bastola (2007). Bhadra (2002) argues that women in the corporate sector are often overlooked compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, female administrators generally receive lower compensation than their male colleagues, even when their work is comparable. In accordance with Patel's perspective (2013), the barriers hindering women's access to positions of significant responsibility in both public and private organizations represent a substantial cost for society as a whole. The disparity between the high educational attainment of women and their career advancement implies a squandering of talents and human resources in a global economy where human capital is a crucial factor for competitiveness (European Commission, 2015).

Nisar (2011) asserted that effective leaders within established Pakistani universities possess qualities such as dedication, commitment, motivation, decisiveness, and a thorough understanding of policies. Khan., N et al.,(2018) observed that a

majority of the managers in both sectors were of authoritarian style, but in comparison, public university leadership was more authoritarian as compared to private university leadership. Knowledge management practices require informed participative management in educational organization where creative thinking is considered as the basic value which is a key factor in knowledge management (Soo, 2002). This shows that there is no significant difference regarding knowledge management measurement between public and private universities.

Farrulsaqlain (2016) investigated methods for enhancing girls' education in Pakistan, advocating for policy enhancements and the incorporation of modern technology into educational frameworks. Despite historical endeavors to implement training programs, these initiatives often failed to deliver equitable advantages to both genders, inadvertently reinforcing traditional gender roles, which particularly disadvantaged women.

Al-Hussein (2011) affirmed that women possess unique leadership traits and skills necessary for leading educational institutions, despite encountering challenges that hinder their leadership effectiveness. Women may choose some roles voluntarily, there are others that they are socially compelled to undertake. Similarly, women in leadership positions often juggle multiple roles, which can lead to conflicts between these roles and an overwhelming sense of responsibility. Female leadership in the education industry correlates directly with enhanced student performance and fosters improved collaboration between students and teachers in the learning journey. Female leaders possess a nuanced understanding of the diverse learning requirements of both students and teachers, particularly as the majority of teaching positions are held by women. This familiarity enables them to effectively identify areas for improvement in teaching methods. A study by Zenger Folkman (2012) comparing men and women across 16 leadership competencies revealed that women are frequently linked with the "soft skills" of leadership, including relationship building, communication, and emotional intelligence.

Macke and Genari (2019) advocate for workplace flexibility, enabling employees to effectively balance

their personal and professional lives, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and performance across the organization. The advancement of digitalization and increased communication technology, allowing workers to perform their duties from anywhere with a suitable internet connection. Such flexible work arrangements became prevalent during the corona virus crisis.

Bastola (2007) also noted that, traditionally, female monitoring opportunities are significantly fewer compared to those available to male counterparts. Additionally, it is noted that women leaders experience slower career advancement compared to their male counterparts in the education sector, which carries significant implications for women's career progression and constrains opportunities for professional development. Furthermore, research suggests that women demonstrate leadership qualities that may differ from those typically associated with men.

Hill et al. (2016) bolster this notion by suggesting that female leadership has a pronounced positive impact on girls, contributing to the mitigation of gender inequalities. Moreover, schools boasting higher proportions of female teachers witness increased enrollment rates for genders, thereby elevating academic standards and reducing dropout rates. Promoting female leadership, particularly in societies where women's roles align with stereotypical norms. Eliminating cultural and social barriers that hinder girls' education and impede women's advancement in various professional spheres is crucial for fostering inclusive and

equitable workplace environments. This study aims to investigate the barriers preventing women from assuming leadership roles in these educational institutions.

The study showed that a variety of factors, including teaching methods, accessibility to technology, education management system use, sensory and visual approaches to learning, workspace architecture, lighting, noise levels, and temperature, all had a significant impact on the academic achievement of learners (Iram, Khan, & Tariq, T, 2024).

In several countries, women are increasingly permitted to assume roles as school leaders based on their demonstrated competence and strengths in meeting the established standards for principals. Consequently, this creates equal opportunities for females to pursue leadership positions within educational institutions (Longman & Madsen, 2014).

### Research Design

The study is descriptive in nature.

### Population & Sample of the Study

Population of the current study was all the secondary schools of District Haveli. The sample of the study was 14 principals and 157 teachers of Government Girls secondary schools.

### Research Tool

Self-developed questionnaire was the tool for research study. For quantitative data collection questionnaire was used

### Data Analysis

Here is a table combining all the statements with their respective descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation):

Category	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personal Barriers	Female teachers face difficulty in maintaining balance between home and job	157	3.8462	1.09614
	Workload at both home and school weakens your determination to carry on your job	157	3.1189	1.29185
Social Barriers	Your family allows you to do a job	157	3.9580	1.08689
	During the job, your family supports you	157	2.5175	1.22677
	Childcare facility is available at your school	157	2.6224	1.32582
	Responsibilities in the extended family hinder your performance	157	3.4755	1.18579

<b>Academic Barriers</b>	Lack of exposure hinders you from a leadership position	157	3.4336	1.21354
	Suitable mentoring plays an effective role in leadership	157	3.6993	1.04163
	Activity-based programs are arranged to update your skills during the job	157	2.8741	1.38842
	Workshops are held to increase the capacity	157	3.7483	1.06459
	Seminars are arranged to increase your exposure	157	2.3077	1.31744
	You find many academic role models to follow	157	3.1469	1.31062
	Motivational sessions are organized to keep you motivated to achieve the goal	157	3.0699	1.38732
<b>Management Skills</b>	Female teachers have good communication skills	157	3.4825	1.11868
	Teachers have a clear vision for the institution's future	157	3.8741	0.91826
	Motivational strategies are practiced in the class to keep students motivated	157	3.9231	0.93505
	You are punctual in taking class	157	4.0420	0.94104
	Effective time management skills are used to teach every subject accordingly	157	3.8182	1.00447

The data reveals several insights into barriers faced by female teachers and their management skills. Personal barriers show moderate agreement that balancing home and job is difficult (mean = 3.8462), and the workload weakens job determination (mean = 3.1189). Social barriers highlight family support for working (mean = 3.9580), though ongoing support is lower (mean = 2.5175), and childcare facilities are limited (mean = 2.6224). Academic barriers reveal moderate challenges in exposure and leadership (mean = 3.4336) and emphasize the importance of mentoring (mean = 3.6993). However, there is limited access to skill-updating programs (mean = 2.8741) and exposure-increasing seminars (mean = 2.3077). Respondents find academic role models moderately available (mean = 3.1469). Management skills are rated positively, with strong communication (mean = 3.4825), clear institutional vision (mean = 3.8741), effective motivational strategies (mean = 3.9231), and punctuality (mean = 4.0420). Time management in teaching is also viewed favorably (mean = 3.8182).

## Discussion

Female teachers at leadership position faced difficulties to run all the managerial tasks smoothly. There were several faced barriers related to social, cultural and academic one. The current study

examine that most of the female teachers are not getting support from family to protect their children. Khan and Fatima (2019) discuss how cultural norms surrounding gender roles constrain female educators to traditional caregiving roles, hindering their progression into leadership roles within schools. Female teachers also face personal barriers to manage both home and school. It was indicated from the current study that there are some already set standards for women about not to communicate with male parents during meetings. Khan and Ahmed (2021) also supported that socially acceptable trends make it difficult for the teachers to take higher authorities seats. Research indicates that female educators often grapple with heightened stress and burnout resulting from the intersection of work and family duties (Zahid et al., 2022). These challenges are exacerbated by inflexible work policies and insufficient support systems, further complicating the effective fulfillment of their managerial duties by female educators.

This study also highlighted that female teachers are lacking with proper guidance and role models to follow in order to update their knowledge and managerial skills. The pivotal role of mentoring in fostering educators' professional growth and facilitating their advancement into leadership roles. Regrettably, female teachers often lack access to

mentorship networks and guidance opportunities, depriving them of crucial avenues for skill development and career progression. The unequal allocation of resources and financial constraints pose significant challenges to the leadership capabilities of female educators.

## Conclusion

After conducting a thorough analysis of several factors, such as social barriers, cultural, personal and a lack of professional development opportunities, it is evident that barriers minimize the achievement of effective leadership in secondary education. The findings align with the array of studies that emphasize the importance of supportive work environments and leadership frameworks in cultivating teacher effectiveness and enhancing student outcomes. Various barriers explored by the studies that hinder the management abilities of female educators. These barriers include stereotypes and gender bias, restricted access to leadership roles by family and society, limited access to academic role models and lack of career advancement opportunities. Educational institutions may prioritize the implementation of anti-discrimination measures and foster inclusive leadership cultures that promote equity and diversity to take women's services. Establishing mentorship programs and support networks can empower female educators to pursue leadership roles with confidence and contribute significantly to educational quality. In order to close these gaps, balancing work responsibilities with care giving and family duties is necessary. Furthermore, to address this disparity, policymakers, stakeholders, and educational authorities must collaborate to establish inclusive professional development frameworks tailored to the unique needs of female educators.

## Recommendations

- Considering the first finding that many teachers are unable to maintain balance between home and school, it is essential to build clear boundaries between personal professional lives. It will help to maintain balance.
- Based on finding 2 it is recommended that Develop flexible work policies that cater to the diverse requirements of teachers with families,

offering alternatives such as telecommuting and adaptable schedules.

- Schools should consider establishing on-site child care facilities or partnering with local child care providers to offer convenient and accessible care for the children of faculty, staff, and students.
- Government may establish professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing gender bias awareness and communication competencies among female educators, enabling them to engage confidently and inclusively with parents of all genders.

## References

- Ali, T., Khan, M., Raza, S., & Malik, M. (2019). Barriers to women's leadership in Pakistan's education sector. *Educational Review*, 66(1), 56-69.
- Bastola, K. (2007). Leadership and gender disparities in the workplace: An educational perspective. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 5(2), 50-75.
- Bashir, I., Khan, N., & Tariq, T. (2024). Impact of ergonomic factors on university students' academic performance. *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences*, 3(3).
- Bhadra, C. (2002). Women and leadership in the corporate sector: Gender inequality and policy intervention. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7(1), 45-57.
- European Commission. (2015). The gender gap in leadership: A statistical overview. *European Leadership Journal*, 12(3), 76-92.
- Hacıfazlıoğlu, Ö. (2010). Leadership in educational organizations: A gender perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(4), 490-509.
- Hill, C., Corbett, C., & St. Rose, A. (2016). Why so few? Women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. *AAUW*, 12(2), 100-116.
- Hryniewicz, L. G., & Vianna, M. A. (2018). Barriers to women's participation in the leadership of higher education institutions in Brazil. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 33(5), 363-377.

- Jones, P., & Smith, R. (2020). Leadership in educational institutions: A gendered perspective. *Educational Leadership Review*, 15(2), 27-43.
- Khaliq, A., Ahsan, M., & Malik, R. (2017). Gender equality in leadership: Women's participation in Pakistan's education sector. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 18(3), 98-109.
- Kovaleva, E., Ryabchikova, A., & Novikova, N. (2023). Women in educational leadership: Challenges and successes in modern schools. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 38(2), 60-75.
- Main, L., Turner, J., & Smith, K. (2022). Female leadership in schools: A comprehensive review of global perspectives. *Journal of Global Education*, 44(3), 111-130.
- Macke, J., & Genari, D. (2019). The impact of workplace flexibility on organizational performance: A case study from Brazil. *Journal of Workplace Culture*, 25(4), 85-102.
- Khan, N., Aajiz, N. M., & Ali, A. (2018). Comparison of management practices in public and private universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(1), 216-234.
- Nadeak, B., & Juwita, R. (2020). Educational leadership: A pathway to improved public primary school performance in Indonesia. *Educational Management and Leadership*, 22(4), 77-88.
- Nisar, K. (2011). Leadership qualities in Pakistani higher education. *International Journal of Leadership and Organizational Development*, 9(1), 5-18.
- Patel, M. (2013). Gender inequalities in leadership positions: Implications for public and private organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior and Leadership*, 19(4), 12-33.
- Raza, S., & Malik, M. (2020). Educational leadership and gender disparities: The case of Pakistan. *Educational Leadership Quarterly*, 41(3), 45-68.
- Shah, D. (2016). The role of gender in leadership: Pakistani women in education. *Journal of Education for Women*, 3(2), 33-50.
- Siddiqui, S. (2014). Gender norms and leadership opportunities in Pakistan. *International Journal of Gender Studies*, 28(2), 70-85.
- Zenger Folkman. (2012). A study of women in leadership: Leadership competencies and gender differences. *Journal of Gender and Leadership Studies*, 7(1), 1-15.