Successful leadership practices of head teachers for school improvement:
Some evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract
Purpose
The main purpose of this study is to identify the successful leadership practices of head teachers for school improvement at secondary level in Pakistan.

Design/methodology/approach
The study was descriptive (survey type) in nature. It was conducted on a sample of 351 secondary school head teachers, 702 elementary and secondary school teachers working in the government secondary schools of Punjab province. Data were collected using a mixed-methods research design that included: review of related literature, documents indicating school achievements and student attainment, questionnaires and in-depth semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders including the head teachers, teachers, parents and students. The validity and reliability of the instruments was ensured through experts' opinions and pilot testing in mid-2007; the overall reliability was established at 0.923 alpha level.

Findings
The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the head teachers of successful schools developed a common and shared school vision and promoted a culture of collaboration, support and trust. They empowered others to lead and distributed leadership responsibilities throughout the school; involved different stakeholders in the process of decision making; developed and maintained good relationships among different personnel of school community. They emphasised the professional development of teachers as well as themselves, and involved parents and community in the process of school improvement.

Practical implications
The findings of this article may be useful for other countries of almost similar socio-economic status, to improve quality of teaching and learning at secondary level.

Originality/value
The paper shows that policy makers, administrators, managers and head teachers at secondary school level may improve school performance by adopting effective strategies for school improvement in Pakistan.

Keywords
Successful leadership practices | Principals | School improvement | Secondary schools | Empowerment | Pakistan

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In the most successful schools, trustees and school leaders analysed data to target and raise student achievement, while also building school capacity and sharing leadership at multiple levels. We found that team leadership worked by sharing expertise and applying teaching as inquiry in professional learning conversations for teaching focused on target students’ needs. Individual teachers influenced outcomes positively by taking responsibility for learner success, and involving students, parents and whānau in meeting individual needs. Appraisal discussions about school improvement focused on the leader’s knowledge of the impact of teaching on learning across the school. The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement defined teacher leadership as, “The process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of the school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.” Teacher leaders step outside the classroom to bring their expertise to a larger platform, influencing educational culture, practice and growth in their communities. They may help other teachers improve their ability to instruct students, or they may lead teams – The main purpose of this study is to identify the successful leadership practices of head teachers for school improvement at secondary level in Pakistan. Design/methodology/approach. – The study was descriptive (survey type) in nature. It was conducted on a sample of 351 secondary school head teachers, 702 elementary and secondary school teachers working in the government secondary schools of Punjab province. Data were collected using a mixed-methods research design that included: review of related literature, documents indicating school achievements and student attainment, questionnaires an