A Research Programme Consortium on
Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries

EXAMINING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the issues facing primary school leaders in developing countries as the push towards greater educational quality accelerates under the impact of the Millennium Development Goals. The authors seek to illuminate these issues initially through an examination of how 'educational quality' is delineated. Recent policy initiatives addressing issues of educational quality within Ghana, Tanzania and Pakistan are then analysed, with the implications that these developments have for primary school leaders being teased out. The paper concludes with a call for further focused research in this area if the laudable goals of improved educational quality for all children are to be achieved.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the issues facing primary school leaders in developing countries as the push towards greater educational quality accelerates under the impact of the Millennium Development Goals. The authors seek to illuminate these issues initially through an examination of how 'educational quality' is delineated. Recent policy initiatives addressing issues of educational quality within Ghana, Tanzania and Pakistan are then analysed, with the implications that these developments have for primary school leaders being teased out. The paper concludes with a call for further focused research in this area if the laudable goals of improved educational quality for all children are to be achieved.

2.   QUALITY EDUCATION

The central issue facing educational policy makers and practitioners in the developing world is one of matching the imperatives for quantitative expansion of educational provision with the need to ensure the quality of the education provided for those children who do enter the school environment. As Leu & Price-Rom (2006) have suggested:

> Educational quality in developing countries has become a topic of intense interest, primarily because of countries' efforts to maintain quality…in the context of quantitative expansion of educational provision…Whether explicit or implicit, a vision of educational quality is always embedded within countries' policies and programs, (Leu & Price-Rom, 2006, p 2).

Policy statements emphasise the importance of attaining 'quality' with, for example, the main aim of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) 2002-2006 in Tanzania being:

> to ensure that all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free compulsory primary education of good quality, (Swai & Ndidde, 2006, p14).

This, of course, is not an issue facing developing countries alone but the implications of the Millennium Development Goals 'massification' of compulsory schooling through increased enrolment are more significantly faced by those countries where demand for education outstrips resource availability. In essence, then, policy makers are seeking ways to maximise the quality of education received by pupils through the use of levers at the national, regional, local and school levels. It is important, therefore, for there to be clear and informed debate about the nature of 'educational quality' within the context of schools in developing countries. It should then be possible to identify the extent to which policy initiatives match the ideas emerging from such a debate, and then to examine the implications that these issues have upon the role of school leaders in their day-to-day practice.

Attempts to define 'educational quality' are legion, since the very concept of 'quality' is an evasive one. At the level of international debate and action, three defining principles tend to be broadly shared. These are the need to understand quality education in terms of (a) content relevance, (b) access and outcome and (c) observance of individual rights. In much current international thinking, these principles are expected to guide and inform educational content and processes and also represent more general social goals to which education itself should contribute. This is reflected in the thinking of the following international bodies:

UNICEF recognizes five dimensions of quality: the learners, the environment, content, processes and outcomes, these being founded on the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation (UNICEF, 2000, in UNESCO, 2005).

UNESCO's understanding of education quality seeks to identify unambiguously the important attributes or qualities of education that can best ensure that goals are actually met. According to UNESCO, quality education should encourage the learner's creative and emotional development, support objectives of peace, citizenship and security, promote equality and seek to pass global and local cultural values down to future generations. It should allow children to reach their fullest potential in terms of cognitive, emotional and creative capacities.

Underpinning UNESCO's quality education framework is a four-fold principle of learning (Delors et al, 1996) as illustrated below:

Type	Principle
Learning to Know	Acknowledging that quality learning provides opportunities for learners to build their own knowledge daily combining indigenous and external elements
Learning to Do	Opportunities for learners to apply what they learn
Learning to Live Together	Developing in learners attitudes free from discrimination, where all have equal opportunities to develop themselves, their families and their communities
Learning to Develop Skills	Emphasis on skills required for developing individuals' full potential

This conceptualization of education provides an integrated and comprehensive view of learning and, therefore, of what constitutes education quality.

The concept of 'educational quality' as it relates to education within the developing world has also been subject to increasing debate, beginning initially with the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), at the Jomtien Conference in 1990. This identified quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. While the notion of quality was not fully developed, it was recognized that expanding access alone would be insufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of the individual and society. Emphasis was accordingly placed on assuring an increase in children's cognitive development by improving the quality of their education.

Similarly, the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum 2000) affirmed that quality was 'at the heart of education' – a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. Its expanded definition of quality set out the *desirable characteristics* of learners (healthy, motivated students), *processes* (competent teachers using active pedagogies), *content* (relevant curricula) and *systems* (good governance and equitable resource allocation). Although this established an agenda for achieving good education quality, it did not ascribe any relative weighting to the various dimensions identified. Thus, the Dakar forum emphasised the need to "improve all aspects of quality of education to achieve recognised and measurable learning outcomes for all-especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" (Dakar Framework for Action, Article 7, World Education Forum 2000). One can see here, for example, evidence of the influence of the Delors/UNESCO concept of the rounded individual emerging from having experienced a 'quality' education.

In-country examinations of the concept have also mushroomed in the recent decade, as countries have struggled to come to terms with the need to balance development goals of increased educational access and retention with the resource implications of these policy developments. The

importance of contextual factors has become more and more recognised as having significance in the debate about 'educational quality', a focus emphasised in the Tanzanian study by Mosha (2000). He suggested that key factors affecting notions of 'quality education' are the school's contextual setting, the basic inputs into the educational process, and the processing of inputs into the outputs or outcomes of the school. He therefore related context with the type of environment from which a school gets its inputs and to which it supplies its outputs. His argument was that it is imperative to consider context when assessing quality of any educational undertaking. He included the political, economic, legal, demographic and cultural conditions, as well as the international backdrop as forming the elements of the school context. Another category of variables according to Mosha (2000) was the process of education, and by this he included context and environment of the school. According to Mosha (2000) the educational process that takes place between teacher and pupil constitutes the major factor in determining the nature of the learning and achievement of the pupils. In discussing educational outcomes, Mosha (2000) went on to make the valuable distinction between those that are desired and expected and those that are either undesired or unexpected.

More recent studies have moved into the arena of what Barrow et al (2006) have called the '"black box" — the space in which educators and others think and act in relation to project inputs and consequences for project outputs' (p2). These authors analysed four recent USAID educational projects in the developing world in relation to the ways in which teachers conceived the concept of 'educational quality'. Though the overall sample of teachers was small in number, these studies from Ethiopia, India, Namibia and Nigeria point the way to some interesting issues in relation the this evasive notion. In their comparative analysis of these studies, Barrow et al (2006) concluded that:

> …teachers do tend to articulate their conceptions of educational (and instructional) quality with terms normally associated with student-centred and actively learning approaches to teaching and learning …[and] that in Ethiopia, India, and Namibia there is clear correspondence between teachers' conceptions of educational quality and the ideas expressed in policy discourses, (p 16).

This study does raise some vital questions in relation to the role of government policy and school leader practice in forging the elements that can increase educational quality. Are these teacher conceptions of educational quality matched by those of school leaders in these four countries? Would similar studies within a Ghanaian, Tanzanian or Pakistani context yield similar findings?

3.   POLICY INITIATIVES

Ghana, Tanzania and Pakistan have all experienced a plethora of educational policy initiatives in recent decades, many of which are seeking to address issues related to the quest for educational quality. The aim has been to exert influence upon the key areas of inputs and process, thereby seeking to maximise pupil learning and achievement.

3.1   Ghana

One indicator of quality is students' scores on internationally standardised or nationally comparable tests of achievement in knowledge, skills, behaviour, and attitudes. The effects of non-school inputs, such as parental background, would have to be held constant to isolate the effect of schooling on test scores. The tests of cognitive achievement are felt to be good predictors of students' future earnings (Bishop, 1992). In this light, strategies for assuring quality teaching and learning have become critical in Ghana's quality education agenda and were underscored by the *President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana* which reported in 2002. The Education Ministry in Ghana has therefore introduced a comparable test scheme - *the Minimum*

Standards of Performance (MSP) – which clearly defines competences that pupils should master in each of the subjects taught at the basic school level. The MSP seeks to ensure that teachers moved beyond the mere coverage of syllabuses to ensuring that pupils' acquired defined knowledge, skills and attitudes. There is also a Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) for measuring and monitoring performance of all subjects, especially the literacy and numeracy levels of primary school pupils. The PMT is administered to all primary levels (P1-P6) and aims at finding out whether the minimum standards set have been attained or not.

Pupils' access to and use of appropriate textbooks are also seen to be a critical factor in quality education implementation. In Ghana, the Ghana Education Service textbook policy requires each basic school pupil to access a textbook in each of the core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science). Yet, lack of adequate textbooks continues to be a problem. Statistics from circuits within one municipality in the country's Central region – Cape Coast, illustrated in Table 1, exemplifies this problem, with only approximately 25% of pupils enrolled having access to English textbooks, for example:

Table 1: Primary Pupils' Textbooks (2002/2003)

Circuit	Enrolment	Science Textbooks		Maths Textbooks		English Textbooks	
		Available	Number Needed	Available	Number Needed	Available	Number Needed
Cape Coast	3374	1319	2055	1374	2000	856	2518
Aboom	4323	1689	2634	1982	2341	1067	3256
Bakaano	2935	1495	1440	1629	1306	922	2013
Pedu / Abora	4771	1973	2798	2339	2432	1425	3346
OLA	2792	1166	1626	1252	1540	439	2353
Efutu	1714	755	959	975	739	482	1232
TOTAL	19,909	8397	11512	9551	10358	5191	14718

Source: Ghana Education Service School Mapping Report, 2003

The preparation of teachers for teaching is considered by many studies to be a critical indicator of education quality (DeJaeghere et al, 2006). Teacher quality depends not only on observable and stable indicators but also on the quality of training they receive. It also depends on the behaviour and the nature of the relationship teachers maintain with their pupils or students. The potential indicators deal with such aspects as academic qualifications, pre-service and in-service training, years of service/experience, ability or aptitude and content knowledge.

Available data suggest that large proportions of primary school teachers in Africa lack adequate academic qualifications, training and content knowledge, especially in developing countries. At the 2000 *World Education Forum* held in Dakar, attracting and retaining qualified teachers in the teaching profession emerged as a major threat to achieving the *Millennium Development Goal* of providing *Education for All* (EFA) by 2015. In Ghana, although the entry qualification for teacher training is six subjects in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE), a 2003 national study of teacher demand and supply reports 'a shortage of 40,000 trained teachers in basic schools (ie the first nine years of schooling for ages 6 to 15, comprising six years primary and three years junior secondary), with untrained teachers filling 24,000 of the vacancies' (Cobbold, 2006, p 453). Alternative strategies for alleviating this teacher shortage have been introduced within the country, and Cobbold (ibid.) analyses one such approach, that of an attempt to encourage more teachers to work in the rural areas of Ghana through district sponsorship of training in exchange for the teacher agreeing to teach in the districts for at least three years. While this study does succeed in pointing out the key factors in the attempts to get quality teachers into rural schools, the writer concludes by suggesting that 'the experience with initiatives which use financial incentives to attract candidates into teaching has shown that such inducements alone have very little effect on recruitment and retention' (ibid. p 464). In rural schools the problem had gender dimensions, in

that women are acutely under-represented in school headship. Oduro and MacBeath (2003) found that two of the female headteachers in their study identified the considerable initial difficulties they faced when they took over their posts, especially with older male teachers who found it hard to accept and cooperate with a female school leader. Similarly, a gender analysis of the informal dimensions of institutional life in schools in Ghana and Botswana (Dunne, 2007) suggested that:

> 'In both countries, there was a dominance of male teachers in senior and management positions, even though three of the case study schools, one in Botswana and two in Ghana, were headed by females. On the whole both female and male teachers seemed happier to work under a male head…Respondents attributed the male and female resistance to female leadership to cultural expectations, which, in their stereotyped form, cast men as leaders and women as followers'
> (ibid. p 504).

The highly structured day-to-day elaboration of the 'gender regime' (ibid. p 502) within the schools studied appeared as a key factor that impacted upon the behaviour and role-modelling of female teachers and also on the expectations of female pupils. While emerging from a small sample of schools, these results suggest that this factor has considerable repercussions for the development of quality education 'for all'.

Teacher absenteeism, a persistent problem in many countries, reduces the quality of education and results in a waste of resources. In 2003, a World Bank study revealed that, in Uganda, 26% of teachers had been absent from school in the week before the researchers' visit, with the figure for Zambia being 17%. More recently, a study by Chaudhury et al (2006) of absenteeism among teachers and health workers in six developing countries found that, having made nearly 35,000 observations on teacher attendance, an average of 19% of teachers were absent across the countries. This study succinctly concludes that 'in service delivery, quality starts with attendance' (ibid. p 114).

In Ghana, teacher absenteeism, especially in rural schools, has been a recurring concern for educational authorities. High levels of teacher absenteeism are generally seen as indicators of severe dysfunctions in the school system, and may have many different direct causes. Lack of professional standards and lack of support and control by education authorities and cultural demands are major issues in Ghana. In a study of rural schools in one district of Ghana, Oduro & MacBeath (2003) observed that within the schools they studied, most teachers absented themselves on Fridays to attend funerals. In addition, teachers often absented themselves when they needed to travel to get their monthly pay. Michaelowa (2001) attributes absenteeism to a situation where conditions compel teachers to take on a second job to supplement insufficient salaries. These issues suggest the continuing importance of resource factors in impacting upon practitioners in their day-to-day behaviour and their attitude towards their work. It is interesting to note that moves towards the decentralisation of educational provision and management have not always lead to improvements in practice or educational quality (Pryor, 2005; Chapman et al, 2002).

3.2 Tanzania

There are two major initiatives that have influenced policy and practice of education in Tanzania in recent years. These are the Education and Training Policy (ETP) and the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP).

(i) Education and Training Policy

Besides the philosophy of Education for Self Reliance (ESR), which guided education practice from the mid 1960's, Tanzania did not have a comprehensive education and training policy until 1995, when the government officially launched the Tanzania Education and Training Policy (ETP) to guide, synchronise and harmonize all education and training structures, plans and practices in order

to ensure access, equity and quality at all levels. The ETP acted as a visionary guide for the future development of education and training for Tanzanians as they encountered the challenges of a globalizing world. It stipulated the following education and training policy objectives:

- decentralising education and training by devolving the function of managing and administering education and training to regions and districts, education institutions and communities; improving the quality of education and training through strengthening in-service teacher training programmes; the supply of teaching and learning materials; rehabilitation of school/college physical facilities; teacher trainers' programmes; research in education and training, and streamlining the curriculum, examinations and certification;
- expanding the provision of education and training through the liberalisation of the provision of education and training, and the promotion and strengthening of formal and non-formal, distance and out-of-school education programmes; promoting access and equity through making access to basic education available to all citizens as a basic right; institutions and resources; expanding and improving girls' education; screening for talented, gifted and disabled children so that they are given appropriate education and training, and developing programmes to ensure access to education to disadvantaged groups.

The ETP took into account the historical background of the Tanzania education system and various reports and recommendations regarding the Tanzania education system. In particular, the ETP drew on the philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) by emphasising the need for curriculum reform for purposes of integrating theory with the acquisition of practical life skills and the linkage of education plans and practices with national socio-economic development and the world of work. The ETP, by embracing neo-liberal ideas such as cost sharing, cost recovery and cost efficiency, was cognizant of a shift from the policy emphases between the 1960's and the early 1980's, which had placed a strong reliance on the state control of the economy and the public, to a more liberalised economy led by market principles. This was reflected in the ETP broad policies of education and training such as:

- enhancement of partnership in the provision of education and training, through the deliberate efforts of encouraging private agencies to participate in the provision of education, to establish and manage schools and other educational institutions
- broadening of the financial base for education and training, through more effective control of government spending, cost sharing and liberalisation strategies

(ii) Education Sector Development Programme

From the mid 1990's the Government of Tanzania embarked on the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) to address existing problems and to tackle new challenges resulting from on-going macro-economic, social and political reforms. The ESDP was implemented within the policy framework of the Education and Training Policy (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995), Higher Education Policy (1999), the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (United Republic of Tanzania, 1999), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (United Republic of Tanzania, 2000), the Public Sector Reforms Programme (PSRP), the Tanzania Assistance Strategy (TAS), and recently it has been enhanced by the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) (United Republic of Tanzania, 2005). The ESDP provided a framework for achieving a greater access to the education sector and tackling equity, retention, quality and management issues. It operationalises a series of policy-driven reforms covering all sub-sectors in the education sector. The Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP 2002-2006) (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001) was one of the first outcomes of the ESDP. It had projected an enrolment of more than 7.5 million primary school age children by 2006. The PEDP strategic priorities included:

- enrolment expansion (enrolment and access to primary education for all 7-12 old children);
- quality improvement (optimal utilisation of human, financial and teaching and learning materials);
- capacity building (pre-service and in-service teacher training; governance and management; financial management and EMIS); and,

- institutional and operational efficiency improvement.

The government has now embarked on PEDPII (2007-2011). Enrolment expansion, both at pre-primary and primary education levels, together with quality improvement, continue to be given the highest priority.

Access and Equity

Under current Tanzanian policy, girls/women, street children/working children, the disabled, rural/remote, nomadic and mobile communities have been identified as the major groups which are educationally disadvantaged (Malekela & Ndeki, 1999; Hakielimu, 2005). With access being less than universal, these groups have historically been denied quality basic education. Moreover, children from different locations covering the same school level often experience different education in terms of cognitive outcomes. Policy initiatives have focused on advocacy, mobilization and partnership in order to improve access, retention and quality in line with Education for All goals.

Cost Sharing

A key issue related to educational access in Tanzania is the affordability of households to pay part of the costs for pre-primary and primary education, and balancing these costs with other charges in health and taxation. The costs of education are often a significant factor in the annual income of most parents. Many parents are unable to afford these costs, and hence this has become one of the biggest causes of decrease in enrolment of children in primary schools (Dachi, 2000). The ETP emphasis has been on cost sharing and cost recovery measures with private organisations, private businesses, NGOs and communities. It has stated plainly that, '…financing education and training shall be shared be shared between government, communities, parents and end-users' (1995:91) and that '…school and tuition fees shall be collected and retained for use by relevant education and training institutions themselves…'(ibid).

Conversely, in order to achieve the PEDP enrolment targets, one of the strategies employed by the government was to abolish school fees and all other mandatory parental contributions, therefore shifting the cost burden relatively to the communities. Yet, there are still regional and district inequalities in terms of enrolment and retention of children in primary schools. The abolition of school fees and obligatory parental contributions seem to have had unforeseen consequences that have impacted upon the possibility of all pupils receiving a quality education. The household decision to enrol a child in school is not only influenced by the current costs and anticipated future benefits of schooling, but also how parents perceive the quality of education services offered (Kailembo, 2000).

Community Participation in School Management

The Government, through the ETP (1995) and the implementation of the ESDP, has called for greater community participation in the management of school programmes and activities. Community micro-projects and other initiatives have been developed to encourage a sense of genuine participatory planning and bottom-up approaches to development. The focus has been on developing an emerging sense of ownership as households and communities participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of educational provision (Mchomvu, 1993; Domonko, 2005). Decentralisation and the devolution of responsibilities and ownership of initiatives to communities and schools have encouraged a commitment to capacity building at community/school level in attempts to promote effective quality provision. This capacity building has to be on-going and sustainable. The success of school and community level initiatives has largely depended on:

- the premium that the community attaches to education
- the micro-economic capacity of the communities

- household's willingness and ability to support the initiative(s)
- the managerial and supervisory capacity of local education authorities and school committees
- the level of community mobilisation and awareness creation
- the political will and attitude of implementers at district, village and school towards the initiative.

The ETP (1995) required that the Boards and Committees of education/training institutions were responsible for management, development, planning, and discipline and financing of institutions under their jurisdiction. A good functioning primary school requires a good and active school committee. Yet, many school committees exist in names (on paper). In reality they do not function. School mapping has insisted on school based management by school committees and strengthening the capacities of communities and schools by improving school-community linkages and internal efficiency of the school system (Japanese International Cooperation Agency, 2005). PEDP reiterates the need to promote capacity-building for the boards/school committees in the areas of governance and management of schools, financial management and Educational Management Information Systems.

3.3 Pakistan

The provision of quality education has been, and continues to be, one of Pakistan's most pressing problems (Nayyar and Salim, 2006; Retallick and Datoo, 2005). Nayyar & Salim (2006) also note the lack of commitment of successive governments to public education in the country. Recent figures indicate that the overall literacy rate for those aged 10+ is 53%, with male pupil literacy at 61.3% and female pupil literacy at 36.8% (World Bank, 2006). School participation rates are low; enrolment at the primary level is at 49% (Saleem, 2002), while the secondary enrolment for males and females stands at 29% and 1.9% respectively (Ali, 2006). The drop-out rate is also said to be high: 31.3% at the primary level, 30% at the middle level and 45% at the secondary level (Aly, 2007). Enrolment and retention rates remain lower for girls as compared with boys, particularly in rural areas.

A range of socio-cultural and economic factors such as the perceived role of females in society and entrenched poverty have been cited as reasons for girls' lower participation rates in education. Perhaps, this grim picture is due to the fact that '…education is not perceived as a vital, central need of Pakistani society; it is, therefore, not accorded the protection enjoyed by other [social] institutions' (Hoodbhoy, 1998, p 4). This is further compounded by the lack of technical, human and financial resources, thereby making schools and schooling inaccessible to many children (Ali, 2006).

Policy documents reflect an awareness of the ills that plague the education system in Pakistan, namely a highly centralised system and a low capacity for effective management among education managers, including headteachers, throughout the national education system (Aly, 2007). However, much of it remains rhetoric with little action to show for it. This has been partly attributed to frequent changes in education policies (for example, the National Education Policy, 1998-2010, Government of Pakistan 1998). Nayyar & Salim (2006) provide a critical evaluation of the management of education in Pakistan. They describe it as lacking in vision, professional and technical knowledge and competence. For example, the first education conference held in 1947, though cognisant of the ills plaguing the education system as at independence, did not seem to have any specific recommendation for transforming the educational management system, which is today widely acknowledged as one of the main causes of the falling standards in the quality of education in Pakistan (National Education Policy, 1998-2010, Government of Pakistan 1998). However, as early as 1959, the Commission on National Education emphasised the 'academic' role that educational administrators were expected to play as illustrated in the following comment:

'An Inspector should not be a combination of a clerk and policeman as he [she] is now, but an educationist and we propose immediate steps to bring us in line with practices in advanced countries' (Commission on National Education, 1959, p.324).

The commission, which decried the largely administrative and centralised system of education management, further proposed a decentralised structure of educational administration that would ensure academic freedom as well as administrative and financial autonomy of administrators. However, Memon (2003) notes that this initiative of decentralising school management is yet to be implemented.

The most recent education policy (1998-2010) acknowledges that the failure of major reforms and policy packages over the last fifty years has been due to a 'lack of political commitment, centralisation of authority and absence of public participation' (Government of Pakistan, 1998, p.3) as well 'the non-involvement of teachers as change agents in education reform' (ibid, p.114). The Government has also pledged to enhance and improve the delivery of educational services mainly through decentralisation of the management of education systems:

> Educational administration and management is devolved from the federal and provincial governments to the district governments. Much of the action concerning education is in the communities, tehsils and districts. Most educational planning and decision-making will now take place where the action is. Centralized systems and distanced planning will be replaced by governance which is people and learner-centered. (Government of Pakistan, 2001, page iv).

The National Policy 1998-2010 is specific in its recommendations for the improvement of the effectiveness of the management of education. It calls for a three month intensive programme for all heads of schools and supervisors in the country to be done through the newly established Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education (PITE) as well as the existing Education Extension Centres. It further states that all newly appointed supervisory personnel will only be confirmed 'after obtaining the proposed certificate of educational management and supervision' (Government of Pakistan, 1998, p. 66).

Whilst the 1992-2010 National Education Policy blamed the inadequacies in the education sector on the scarcity of resources and exonerated the administrative and managerial systems in education, it nonetheless proposed that 'the managerial and administrative skills of educational personnel will be improved through professional training in techniques and methods of educational administration' (Government of Pakistan 1998, p. 60). This direction was distinctly different from the other recommendations that had been made in past policy documents. The 1992– 2010 policy seemed to focus on changing the quality of management as opposed to the previous policy statements that concentrated on the structural set-up of the educational management system. In addition, the National Education Policy also proposed the following developments in school leadership and management:
- the establishment of school management committees;
- primary school headteachers were to be appointed at a higher grade and to be required to engage in supervisory work as well as teaching;
- that supervisors should not be allocated more than 15 schools;
- the establishment of a code of ethics for heads of schools and for teachers;
- that all heads of schools, colleges and supervisors be trained in the areas of educational administration and financial rules prior to their appointment; and,
- that financial, administrative and personnel management powers be delegated to the district education officer.

In this connection, in 1999, the Pakistan government undertook the task of decentralising authority and decision-making with the aim of making each district responsible for planning and managing its resources. The aim was that this would lead to an efficient and responsive education system that was inclusive of community participation in the management of education.

Recent studies suggest that progress has not been as quick as anticipated. Aly (2007) has indicated that, while monitoring and evaluation processes of education are in place for the federal government, this has not devolved down to the lowest level of governance such as districts, *tehsils* and even unions. The result is that the administration of public education in the country is partly centralised. The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for the development of policy statements and national plans and budgets as well as the supervision of these policies and plans. The Provincial Education Departments, District governments and NGOs are the implementing agencies. Aly (2007) further argues that the highly centralised education planning, through a failure to consult teachers and headteachers 'often fails to capture the subtleties of educational initiatives at grassroots level, and therefore appears alien to the educational managers who have to implement the policy' (p. 8). There appears to be much within the decentralisation process in Pakistan that reflects what Osei & Brock (2006), in their discussion of local curriculum development in Ghana, have labelled 'deconcentration', where

> …local district councils have had no autonomous sources of revenue, and are generally administrative implementing bodies for policies decided at the centre. In general, it is evident that, despite policy commitments, the government is reluctant to redistribute its functions to local councils, resulting in slow progress, although it has not attempted to halt the decentralisation process altogether (p 441).

Nayyar and Salim (2006) have suggested factors which might explain the ineffective implementation of decentralisation policy. They point out that the recent recommendations and attempts at decentralisation are beleaguered by several constraining factors. These include: tensions between district and provincial education departments over their respective roles and authority; increased interference by local politicians in the district education offices; lack of trained people to work in this decentralisation framework; unclear roles of officers and different tiers of management in the new system; weak school – community relationships; lack of collaboration between district education administration and school management committees; and, education officers who are overloaded with responsibilities regarding the schools under their jurisdiction. Aly (2007) further argues that one of the key issues in the management of education in Pakistan is the inability of decentralisation to focus on educational outcomes.

Thus it can be seen that there is a high degree of similarity across recent education policy in these three countries: a growing concern for educational quality; a concomitant desire to make up for past failings in terms of educational equity and access; and, a view that more and more decision-making ought to be devolved to the locale of the school site. All these drives provide evidence of the key importance of the school leader in achieving improvements in educational quality for pupils.

4.   THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER IN QUALITY EDUCATION

Recent decades have seen an increasing interest in examining the nature of school leadership in a range of different international contexts. As Heck (1996) has suggested:

> The investigation of leadership models…across settings is potentially a rich area for empirical exploration, in that it may both broaden and deepen our understanding of how cultural context may impact the theory and practice of school administration (p 76).

Indeed, in their illuminating study of school leadership concepts, Bush & Glover (2003) suggest that 'the most important variable may be that of culture, both societal and organisational' (p 29). They also warn of the 'simplistic assumptions that leadership styles may be universally applicable' (ibid, p 29). Similarly, Oduro & MacBeath (2003), in talking of school leadership research, argue that 'much

of this work is premised on competences or individual qualities of leaders which, it is assumed travel not only across institutional boundaries but also traverse national and cultural borders' (p 441) and urge researchers to beware '…the fragility of generic competences' (p 441).

Specific studies within a developing country context are beginning to blossom within the research canon. Oplatka (2004), in an incisive review of 27 papers written in this area over the last decade, has suggested that some common themes have emerged. These have coalesced around issues related to 'limited autonomy, autocratic leadership style, summative evaluation, low degree of change initiation, and lack of instructional leadership functions (p 427). For many school leaders in these studies '…basic physical and human resource requirements need to be satisfied prior to any attempt on behalf of the principal to promote quality teaching in his school' (ibid, pp 435-436). As the writer suggests, these are issues far removed from the day-to-day concerns of school leaders working within an Anglo-American context, where there is a greater emphasis on 'distributed leadership' (Bush & Glover, 2003) and a more proactive approach to school management. Oplatka's general conclusion that 'no universal theory of educational administration is valid in all contexts' (2004 p 442) does mirror the views of writers such as Oduro & MacBeath (2003) and should act as a welcome caveat when examining the role of school leaders in promoting educational quality within their institutions.

An interesting detailed study of school leaders within Trinidad & Tobago (Brown & Conrad, 2007) indicates a thoughtful avenue for future research explorations. This study examined:

> principals' and other senior educational leaders' perspectives on school leadership and highlights approaches adopted by principals as they attempted to effectively meet the learning needs of students in a system characterized by an overly centralized bureaucracy in a time of continuous educational reform (p 186).

As such, it reflects the realities of school leadership for many within a developing country context (Oplatka, 2004). Located within a relatively small Caribbean educational system, the study found that 'the principals remained locked in a constricting bureaucracy even as [there was] demand that they be proactive and decisive in the leadership of their schools' (Brown & Conrad, 2007, p 194). In summary, these principals were working with different role expectations compared to colleagues within the United States or Britain where, for example, there was an expectation that school leaders would behave proactively in their attempts to meet the demands of the education system. In Trinidad & Tobago, in contrast, 'the system is prescriptive, and thus principals are expected to follow the directives as mandated by the Ministry of Education' (ibid, pp 194-195).

Thus, the clear message emerging from these studies of school leadership within developing country contexts is that it would be unwise to expect that Anglo-centric ideas and concepts will transfer easily across country boundaries. Analysis of studies within Ghana, Tanzania and Pakistan provide further support for this view.

4.1   Ghana

Findings from a number of studies on quality-related issues in education between 1987 and 2005 suggest that the quality of leadership and management in basic education is generally poor, especially in deprived rural areas.

Between 1987 and 1998, UNESCO's Group on Education Sector Analysis evaluated various aspects of educational quality under the following four main themes:
- improving management efficiency and management;
- improved access and equity;
- improved quality education; and
- others, including the relevance of education to national needs.

This analysis found that the quality of education overall was low, with quality being lower in rural schools than in urban ones. In pinpointing hindrances to achieving quality education, the report focused on the absence of efficient and effective leadership and management, inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, a lack of management information systems, gaps in teaching and professional competence, irrelevant aspects of the school curriculum, and poor enrolment of girls.

A 2003 comparative study carried out by the Educational Assessment and Research Centre (EARC), on behalf of USAID, into the academic performance of public and private school pupils in Southern Ghana found that pupil performance in private schools was higher than public schools. The difference was attributed to the quality of pedagogical supervision in the private schools. This finding mirrors Opare's (1999) observation that 'monitoring and supervision of teacher's work was more regular in private schools than in public junior secondary schools' in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi. A most recent study by Owusu-Ansah (2005) on time management in schools also found that 'while both private and public schools misused instructional time, the private schools better managed instructional time than the public schools'. These studies point to some serious issues for consideration when examining the part that school leaders might play in developing educational quality within the Ghanaian context.

Some of these concerns were explored more fully in the investigation of headteacher roles in Ghana by Oduro & MacBeath (2003). One of the purposes of this study was to explore with headteachers the meanings they themselves gave to their headship roles, with the aim of testing out the applicability of the Hay McBeer generic school leadership competency framework within the Ghanaian context. Analysis of the work done by these Ghanaian headteachers indicated that they were working much closer to the realm of 'management', perceived as being linked to systems and 'paper' activities (Day et al, 2001) than to the area of 'leadership', associated with a focus on the development of people. So, the notion of 'instructional leadership' of colleagues, as a means of supporting reflection and professional development, was replaced by 'supervision', seen as 'a first line of self-defence, ensuring that policies were respected and routines demonstrably observed' (Oduro & MacBeath, 2003, p 448). In addition, the potential for these headteachers to secure a more 'professional' image was stunted by the need to carry out tasks such as acting as a kind of security officer for building projects taking place on site, monitoring the activities of food vendors at the school boundary, supervision of the cleaning and tidying of the school premises and, importantly, supporting teacher colleagues financially by travelling to regional offices to collect salaries. The headteachers in this study also spent a large degree of their time in day-to-day office work, forced on them by the paucity of administrative support available on the school site. It was also clear that many of the respondents in this study were involved in a high and regular degree of teaching, superimposed on these additional tasks. In many ways, then, they were operating within the 'transactional' rather than the 'transformational' domain, with the Hay McBeer competency framework proving not to be directly applicable. Thus, the situation of these Ghanaian headteachers more closely mapped on to that of colleagues in Trinidad & Tobago (Brown & Conrad, 2007) than those in England.

It is evident, though, that there is a need for further focused research to investigate the reality of the headteacher experience in Ghana in terms of role clarity and expectations, and the relationship with teachers that might encourage a more proactive approach towards quality education (Osei, 2006). Brown & Conrad (2007) have argued that, in Trinidad & Tobago, educators felt that 'too many senior officers see the role of principals and teachers not in terms of educating children but in terms of following the mandates of the MOE' (pp 188-189). Given the extensive promotion of decentralisation of educational management by the Government, it is timely to examine the extent to which school leaders in Ghana can act in an autonomous fashion to meet the quality learning needs of their pupils or whether they are seen as civil servants carrying out the demands of ministry officials.

4.2   Tanzania

Much of the available research (Nguni, 2005; Ngirwa, 2006) suggests that very little attention is devoted in studies related to Tanzania to the contribution of leadership and management on the improvement of the quality of primary education.

Essentially the basic context affecting current changes in the Tanzanian education system (as in Ghana and Pakistan also) is globalization. Carnoy (1999) argues that globalization has increased competition between nations, a phenomenon which translates into sub-national competition for access to educational resources. To accurately accommodate such changes, UNICEF (2004) suggested that it was essential to develop and strengthen leadership skills at all levels of institutions to overcome the rigidities that inhibit innovation and reform.

The reformation in education and school management in Tanzania has been consistent with the assumption that decentralisation and school-based management are likely to be an appropriate management structure for the development of quality education (Barrett, 2007; Nguni, 2005). However, as in Ghana, questions need to be raised as to whether decentralising decision-making powers to the school level without providing headteachers with the required skills for handling the changes that are expected to flow from this policy is likely to be a powerful enough driver in elevating the poor quality education in primary schools in Tanzania. This concern has been further reinforced in the study of conditions that influence leadership in Tanzanian schools (Kapinga, 2004). This study emphasised the importance of culture, school context and personal relationships in affecting the nature of school leadership in Tanzanian schools, and highlighted the role played by the headteacher in developing a school culture that is supportive of quality education for pupils.

Two recent studies (Nguni et al, 2006; Swai & Ndidde, 2006) illustrate the need for caution when examining the nature of headteacher roles in Tanzania, since they offer incisive interpretations of the potential for Anglo-centric views of school leadership to be transferred across boundaries. The former study was an attempt to investigate the effects of transactional and transformational leadership styles on Tanzanian teachers' job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and what the writers termed 'organisational citizenship behavior' (Nguni et al, 2006, p 146). The writers posited a distinction between the two leadership styles as relating to whether the leader motivated colleagues by appealing to their self-interest ('transactional') or by appealing to their desire to work for goals that went beyond their own self-interest. Following a detailed examination of teacher attitudes and behaviour within the sample group, this study found that:

> the group of transformational leadership behaviours had strong to moderate positive effects
> on value commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction. The effects
> of transactional leadership behaviours on the outcome variables produced a markedly
> different pattern. Transactional leadership behaviours had no significant and weak aggregate
> effects on value commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction and
> had a strong positive effect only on commitment to stay (Nguni et al, 2006, p 168).

The study found that the teachers were able to identify examples of these differing leadership styles within their school experience and this appeared to lend support to the claim made by seminal leadership theorists such as Bass about 'the universality of the transformational and transactional leadership paradigm across different nations and societies' (Nguni et al, 2006, p 171). The importance of this finding is worth noting, especially in relation to the comments of other researchers, such as Oplatka (2004), who argue strongly that universal, generic leadership styles are like the mythical Lorelei tempting researchers into deep waters.

As part of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) thrust to examine the nature of educational provision in Africa following the Dakar commitment to 'Education for All', the

study by Swai & Ndidde (2006) looked into the nature and characteristics of quality education within primary schools in Singida province in Tanzania. Their examination of policy initiatives within Tanzania took the view that, even within the same country, there had been too much emphasis on whole-country policy recommendations, often with a focus on quantitative rather than qualitative goals. They argued that, because of 'unique local realities' (ibid, p 9), there was a need for a 'structured approach that helps local educators analyze and reflect on which school characteristics are most significant for pupils' learning as part of the process of planning and implementing local improvements in teaching and learning' (ibid, p 9). The backdrop to these concerns was a realisation that, for every 100 children who started school in Singida, approximately 30 had dropped out of the school system before completion.

Emerging from detailed within-school research in 30 schools, the writers were able to offer valuable insights into the realities of headteacher experience. In the area of instructional leadership, for example, they did find that as many as 26 of the 30 headteachers had endorsed teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans. Closer examination, however, found that 14 out these 26 had signed without paying attention to the content or accuracy of the plans or schemes of work. Additionally, only 12 of the 30 headteachers in the sample group were found to have checked and signed pupil workbooks. Finally in this area, the study found evidence of teacher appraisal in only 4 of the sample schools.

This study does suggest some degree of overlap with similar investigations in Ghana, with a strong emphasis on day-to-day, context-related tasks necessary to get the school to function at the most essential levels, with little if any time available in many of the sample schools for headteacher activities that fostered a positive concern for pedagogical quality.

4.3   Pakistan

The role of headteachers is not clearly defined in Pakistan. Currently, there are no official documents like job manuals that clearly outline the responsibilities of headteachers. There are differences in the power granted to headteachers in government and private schools. Simkins et al (1998) point out that the power of government heads is limited by the bureaucratic system of the civil service to the extent that in their study one such head stated: "I consider myself only as a chowkidar [doorman]" (p. 139). In contrast, the non-government headteachers in their study were of the opinion that they are granted considerable managerial freedom and unlike their government counterparts "felt that their managers were working with, rather than against, them" (p. 139).

On the whole, the headteacher manages the school with the help of the deputy head or vice principal, other teachers, administrative staff and school-constituted committees. The headteacher and vice principal usually distribute responsibilities between them, depending on their insights and skills. In large schools, heads of departments manage the academic affairs of the department under the leadership of the headteacher and the vice-principal. In many government schools, both the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the School Management Committee (SMC) assist the headteacher with the non-salary budget as well as the monitoring of the day-to-day problems of the school. In some cases, they also look after the uniform and textbook needs of the poor and disadvantaged children (Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004).

As the number of schools and education systems has expanded, so have the roles and responsibilities of headteachers (Khaki, 2005). Today, government and most of the private school headteachers in Pakistan are expected to be aware of the school budget and have the ability to allocate it among the various departments for expenditure on items like library books, science equipment, minor school repairs, among other competing financial demands. They have to manage books and other supplies. They are also expected to be role models for their students and to meet frequently with student representatives. Headteachers are also required to teach at least two subjects though only a few headteachers do so as the majority claim that school administration leaves no room for teaching (Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004). Often, both government and private

schools run tuck shops that supply stationery items, books and refreshments to children and headteachers are responsible for supervising the income generated through these tuck shops. In many ways, this mirrors the myriad day-to-day duties identified by headteachers in Ghana (Oduru & MacBeath, 2003).

Studies suggest that headteachers do not often see their role as that of academic leaders. According to Memon (1999) this is largely due to a lack of recognition of school leaders as significant players in the provision of quality education. He describes headteachers as administrators or chief executives (Memon & Bana, 2005) rather than professional management leaders. Memon (1998) claims that headteachers in Pakistan narrowly focus on monitoring and evaluation of teachers' and students' work and Warwick and Reimers (1995) state that headteachers 'rarely supervise other teachers, help them develop greater self-confidence and better teaching skills, or work with them in other ways' (p. 99). Their survey of 500 headteachers, revealed that a typical week of a Pakistani headteacher is as follows: twenty-four hours teaching their own classes and substituting for absent teachers; five hours on school administration; four hours on keeping discipline; three hours on supervising teachers; two hours on preparing lesson plans; and less than an hour on fundraising (p. 99).

Swai's case study (2002) studied a government headteacher's role in empowering teachers. She illustrates how headteachers' enactment of their roles was constrained by their own narrow understanding of what these roles entail. For example, her study participant, who claimed to view teacher empowerment as crucial to quality education, was inhibited in enabling this practice to take root in her school because she saw quality education as the completion of the syllabus and competing with other schools. As a result, the headteacher ended up prescribing teaching strategies as well as ways of covering the syllabus to her teaching staff and hence, teacher autonomy and empowerment are hampered.

Swai (2002) argues that headteachers' approach to school leadership is shaped by the cultural realities of the education system in which they work. In the context of Pakistan, she defines these cultural realities as an environment where school leaders are not questioned or criticised; school management and parents do not trust the teachers; where leadership positions are 'protected' by those in post; and, where educational policies largely reflect political agenda and therefore, do not promote efficiency or accountability, especially by those in the higher echelons of power. This study also suggests that the personal characteristics of headteachers in Pakistan seem to be a major hindrance to teacher empowerment. In particular, the reticence of headteachers to be reflective of their beliefs, values and practices was noted and this was seen as a factor likely to prevent them from being able to change their perceptions about their role in bringing about educational change.

Headteachers in Pakistan, particularly those of government schools, have little autonomy in running their schools as they are severely constrained by the highly centralised and hierarchical structures in the education system in the country. This, in many ways, is similar to the experience of headteachers in both Ghana and Tanzania. Simkins et al (1998) point out that "Government schools operate within the complex bureaucratic system of the civil service… Government heads' powers are severely limited by the rules of the system," (p. 139).

It is probable that, because of the bureaucratic and centralised management systems they are inducted into, most headteachers in government schools know no other form of leadership. Consequently, headteachers in Pakistan display autocratic leadership styles and expect unquestionable obedience to their authority (Swai, 2002). Khan (2002), who conducted a case study of a female headteacher's understanding of her role as an effective educational leader, suggested that the notion of shared responsibilities and shared decision-making was alien to both heads and teachers, a view shared by Yousufi (1998). As a result, headteachers feel discouraged to engage in school improvement initiatives that might address questions of educational quality (Simkins et al, 1998).

Warwick and Reimers (1995) refer to the government headteacher's position as the "most ambiguous position of any education official in Pakistan," (p. 98). They identify this role ambiguity as a major issue in school leadership and attribute it to the fact that headteachers have no authority to make decisions on their everyday school issues. Instead, they have to seek permission for the same from their seniors in the central office, or possibly the school management committee or village committee, where such bodies have been established. Maksutova (1999) claims that, generally, headteachers tend to work as administrators rather than academic leaders. Begum (2004) and Swai (2002) also suggest that headteachers tend to find the responsibilities of being both a manager and a leader overwhelming and this sometimes leads to role ambiguity because of the competing demands placed upon them to take up both roles.

Memon (1998) also decries the general lack of professional development opportunities accorded to headteachers. There is no specific training given to newly appointed headteachers to induct them into their job. They, therefore, learn managerial skills on the job or by observing their predecessors (Khan, 2002; Maksutova, 1999). Whilst Memon (1998) found that headteachers needed professional development, Yousufi (1998) found that headteachers themselves did not see teacher professional development as a priority. The need to create opportunities for professional development of school leaders has been underscored by Memon (2003) who described headteachers in Pakistan as extremely busy individuals who are non-reflective about their work and hence are victims of routine habits that do not lead to improved practices. Similar views are held by Chapman (2002) who emphasised that school-level administration across developing Asia needed to operate from a clearer, more articulate understanding of the instructional process and with a much sharper understanding of how school leaders needed to operate in order to convert resources available to them at the community level into effective instructional programs in their schools. Warwick and Reimers (1995) were more critical: they claimed that headteachers in Pakistan were "not trained to be leaders, [do] not see themselves as leaders, and [do] not act like leaders," (p. 99). Describing them as "adrift in the educational system" (p. 101) with no clear definition of "who they are and what they are supposed to do" (p.101), they suggested a training programme for school heads. However, they emphasised that this training programme must be part of a broader effort to promote management and leadership in the provinces and districts leading to reformed styles of operation by the federal and provincial education officials. Presently, much in-service training for school leaders is provided by foreign funded projects which are few in number and provide training to a limited number of headteachers. In addition, the Curriculum Bureau in each province and provincial institutes for teacher education provide training to headteachers in their province; and, the Academy of Educational Planning and Management has also been made responsible for training senior cadre management in education throughout the country.

Despite recent attempts to increase female participation in educational leadership by replacing male teachers with females in primary schools (Memon, 2003), women are still underrepresented in school leadership positions in Pakistan as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2: Distribution of Headteachers in Government Schools

Male headteachers		Female headteachers		Total number of primary headteachers	Total number of secondary headteachers	Total no of headteachers
Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary			
55.5%	57.7%	45.5%	42.3%	170,500	39,000	209,500

Source: Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004

Although educational institutions for girls/women are generally headed by women, they are fewer in number than those of males (Warwick and Reimers, 1995). While the table does show that females make up 44% of the total number of government-sector headteachers in Pakistan, there leadership of girl-only schools does not necessarily translate into a general acceptance of women

school leaders (Dunne, 2007). The lack of gender parity in school leadership in Pakistan is ascribed to women's limited opportunities to higher education that lead to professional degrees required to enable them to take up leadership positions; only 3% women have access to higher education (Asian Development Bank, 2000). Studies (eg Rarieya, 2007) attribute women's inability to pursue higher education to poverty, cultural traditions (female employment is still a taboo for most men in Pakistan in the name of *izzat* (honour)) (Haeri, 2002), insecurity and prevalent discrimination against girls' education.

5.   CONCLUSION

The development of educational policy within developing country contexts has, over the last decade, seen an increasing focus upon notions of 'educational quality', at least in terms of the rhetoric of policy pronouncements. The move towards increasing pupil access to schooling, the driving force for much of the early 1990s, has been replaced by an equally potent demand for ensuring the pupils receive a 'quality' education once they do come to school. As in much of the Anglo-centric world, school leaders in developing countries are denoted as the guardians of quality for the pupils in their care and have been given apparent opportunities through policies which emphasise the decentralisation of much of educational decision-making to the level of the school site. The study of policy development in Ghana, Tanzania and Pakistan suggests however, that with some notable exceptions, school leaders are still locked into a technicist, civil-servant transactional mode, where they are seen as being responsible for carrying out Ministry orders rather than acting as professional educators leading fellow colleagues in an endeavour to improve the education received by pupils. Studies such as that by Barrow et al (2006), which look at the ways in which educators conceive the concept of 'quality' are few and far between in these countries. Similarly, focused research that examines the ways in which school leaders see their roles (Brown & Conrad, 2007) is also sparse. There is a clear need to develop further the research agenda in these countries so as to understand more fully the ways in which policy ideas can be enacted within the context of schools in disadvantaged areas of countries such as Ghana, Tanzania and Pakistan.

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