A Comparative Study of Leadership Attributes of Pakistani and Indonesian Principals in Public Schools

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the diverse leadership attributes and styles of school principals in Pakistan and Indonesia, illuminating the profound impact of cultural contexts on their leadership approaches. Following the qualitative descriptive research design, the study uncovered the unique cultural influences on leadership attributes encompassing self-management, time management, influence, comfort, decision-making, commitment, communication, and empathy, culminating in a spectrum of leadership styles. Pakistani principals often gravitate towards a transactional and authoritative styles, prioritizing commitment and self-management, while their Indonesian counterparts tend to embody a transformational leadership style, emphasizing empathy and open communication. These findings resonate with established leadership theories, reinforcing the necessity of culturally nuanced leadership development initiatives. The study recommends to elevate leadership practices, calling for the integration of humanistic qualities for Pakistani principals and the introduction of greater structure in specific task domains for Indonesian principals, ultimately aimed at enhancing the overall efficacy of educational leadership across diverse cultural landscapes.

Keywords: *Pakistan, Indonesia, school principals, leadership attributes, leadership styles.*

1. Introduction

The school principals' role in fostering constructive changes within educational institutes is critical, making it essential to investigate their leadership roles. Hoy and Smith (2007) assert that a school principal is the most vital factor in determining the success of a school, and Niqab et al. (2015) argue that principals must maintain their professional competence to foster the growth of their team. The effectiveness and improvement of schools are inextricably linked to the effective school principal factors, including leadership attributes such as self-management, time

management, influence, decision-making and commitment, comfort, communication skills, and empathy (Sun et al., 2014). These attributes support principals in carrying out their routine tasks and drawing followers to their leadership style (Sharma, 2010).

Research studies in various countries and educational settings have established a significant correlation between leadership and school improvement. Educational leadership in different countries has distinct characteristics, making it crucial to explore the leadership attributes of principals in these settings and their correlation with specific leadership styles (Barnett, 2005; Adeyemi, 2011). Despite a significant focus on leadership styles in educational leadership research, Sharma (2011) highlights the importance of focusing on leadership attributes, which are often overlooked. Moreover, according to Hallinger and Chen (2015), educational leadership and management research in Asia is still in its early stages, and knowledge in this field needs to be more balanced and dispersed among nations. This study provides valuable insight for academics in both Pakistan and Indonesia and could serve as a recommendation for stakeholders when developing leadership training materials for school leaders. The study utilizes the research instrument titled Leadership Attributes of My Principal developed by Sharma (2010) from a qualitative descriptive approach to comparatively analyze the leadership attributes of school principals in two Muslim-majority countries, Pakistan, and Indonesia. The findings of this study could be used to create educational programs for Muslim leaders worldwide, given that both countries are Muslim-majority countries. As Gale (2019) observes, "all leadership styles can be good choices - in the right situation. Conversely, none of them work all the time. Trying to label yourself with a single leadership style feels like' 60s-era thinking" (p. 60). Therefore, the study also attempts to explore the leadership styles that are directly associated with the leadership attributes utilized by the principals in the two countries. It is pertinent to mention that governance and administration at the school level in Pakistan have only recently received attention and given the past failures of educational programs in Pakistan to improve the quality of education in schools, school leaders must have the knowledge, tools, and tactics they need to transform their schools into high-performing institutions (Sheikh & Zainab, 2006).

The objective of the study is to scrutinize and juxtapose the leadership attributes employed by the principals in Pakistan and Indonesia to apprehend the underlying commonalities and differences in the current school leadership situation in both countries. The study also intends to comprehend the nature of both principals in utilizing various leadership styles while using a particular leadership attribute, which is linked to a specific leadership style. The study could be an essential tool for school leaders looking to develop their leadership abilities and promote cross-cultural understanding between the people of the two nations. The research questions of the study are: (a) How do Pakistani and Indonesian principals employ leadership attributes in their respective educational contexts comparatively? (b) Which leadership styles are connected to the leadership attributes utilized by the principals from the two countries?

2. Literature Review

Leadership in schools is essential for achieving school initiatives, goals, and educational objectives. According to Cheng's (1994) theory, there are five main types of leadership in educational institutions: structural, human, political, cultural, and educational leadership. However, despite the importance of school leadership, school principals face numerous demands and problems as part of their duties (Mestry & Grobler, 2004). Effective leadership requires more than just obtaining a leadership position. Successful leaders must have knowledge of effective leadership techniques and the personal aptitude to put those techniques into practice (Sharma, 2010). Cranston (2002) outlines the abilities and talents required for principals to be competent and effective leaders. Therefore, school leaders must possess exceptional talents to deliver successful leadership in different school contexts. Such abilities are humanistic rather than technical (Sharma, 2010). Sharma (2010) conducted a quantitative study on 400 Malaysian teachers and found that a principal with humanistic qualities was preferred over one with technical capabilities. The humanistic competencies most appealing to the teachers included communication skills, comfort, empathy, decision-making, influence, time management, self-management, and commitment. Sharma (2010) contends that these abilities support a principal in carrying out routine tasks and draw followers to their leadership style, which combines transformative and charismatic leadership.

In examining the attributes and abilities that make for effective school leadership, Sharma (2011) conducted a study involving 300 Malaysian teachers. The results of the study indicated that principals were rated as having average levels of leadership abilities and attributes. Sharma et al. (2012) expanded their research to include exceptional school principals from China, Malaysia, and India. The study involved 100 teachers from each of the three nations, and the results indicated that the eight attributes of leadership were all considered to have a high capacity for the principals. Sun et al., (2014) conducted another quantitative research study to determine the aspects that Chinese teachers considered for effective school principal leadership (ESPL). The study involved polling 100 schoolteachers in Liaoning Province on the Chinese mainland. The results of the study revealed that the 16 extracted ESPL indicators indicated what Chinese teachers expected of their school leaders, and they created a three-dimensional representation of what a good and successful principal should be. The eight factors for becoming a good principal in their study were identical to the eight leadership attributes included in Sharma's (2010) instrument: self-management, time management, influence, comfort, decision-making, commitment, communication, and empathy. Overall, effective school leadership requires humanistic competencies and attributes, such as communication skills, comfort, empathy, decision-making, influence, time management, self-management, and commitment. These attributes support principals in carrying out routine tasks and draw followers to their leadership style, which combines transformative and charismatic leadership. The evaluation of a principal's competency and leadership abilities can be conducted by students, teachers, parents, communities, and/or the principals themselves (Sharma, 2011). Therefore, it is essential to assess and cultivate effective leadership in schools to achieve school initiatives, goals, and educational objectives.

3. Method of the study
3.1. Research Design
The present study aimed to provide a rich, comparative analysis of the leadership attributes among ten school principals: five from Pakistan and five from Indonesia. The qualitative descriptive research design was employed to achieve this, supported by Sharma's (2010) research instrument, namely Leadership Attributes of My Principal.

3.2. Population, Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis
The study sought to elucidate different leadership styles, ranging from democratic and transactional to transformational and servant leadership, depending on the principal's years of service, educational philosophy, and contextual demands. Rather than merely relying on convenience sampling, a more structured purposive sampling method was employed. Principals were deliberately chosen for their capacity to represent diverse educational philosophies, years of experience, and geographical settings in their respective countries. To remove any ambiguity, the interviews were conducted using audio-visual conferencing tools, and were not written or conducted via telephone. This method was chosen to capture nuances in tone and facial expressions, which added an additional layer of data for qualitative analysis. Each principal was subjected to a structured 40-minute interview. The questions, developed from Sharma's (2010) research instrument, were designed to probe into eight core leadership attributes i.e., self-management, time management, influence, comfort, decision-making, commitment, communication, and empathy.
For the Pakistani principals, the interviews were conducted in Urdu. For the Indonesian principals, native Bahasa speakers conducted the interviews. To mitigate the interpreter's influence on the text, the interview recordings were independently translated into English by native certified translators and cross-verified for consistency and accuracy. Finally, thematic analysis was executed as outlined by Miles et al. (2018). Rigor was maintained through multiple coding cycles, peer-review checks, and validation from an independent expert to cross-verify the emerging themes.

4. Results
The results highlighted distinct cultural influences on the leadership styles and attributes exhibited by school principals in Pakistan and Indonesia. Notably, Pakistani principals predominantly emphasized decision-making and commitment as their most salient attributes. In contrast, Indonesian principals were more likely to prioritize humanistic attributes such as communication and empathy. The study further explored these attributes to discern the commonalities and differences in leadership styles in these two diverse settings.

4.1. Self-Management
The attribute of self-management was universally valued by the participating school principals from both countries, albeit with distinct approaches and focuses. In the Pakistani context, one

principal stated, "Self-management for me is about embodying the values and discipline we wish to instill in our students." This emphasis on discipline and structure was a recurring theme. Another principal mentioned, "If you can't manage your stress or emotions, how can you expect to lead an institution?" Contrastingly, Indonesian principals placed a holistic emphasis on self-management. One principal eloquently put it as, "Self-management is not just about professional acumen but also personal well-being." Another leader highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence by stating, "Adaptability and understanding one's own and others' emotions are key elements in effective self-management."

While both groups acknowledged the importance of self-management, their interpretations differed. Pakistani principals often employed phrases like "role-modeling discipline" and "maintaining composure," suggesting a more structured, authoritative perspective. In contrast, Indonesian principals used terms like "work-life balance," "emotional intelligence," and "mental health," pointing to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of self-management. This divergence in interpretation could be deeply rooted in the respective cultural fabrics of the two countries. One might infer that the Pakistani focus on discipline and exemplifying certain behaviors reflects a hierarchical societal structure. On the other hand, the Indonesian emphasis on holistic well-being and emotional intelligence might signify a more collective and humanistic societal orientation. These variances offer essential insights into how the same leadership attribute of self-management is influenced by cultural contexts, thus enriching our understanding of international educational leadership.

4.2. Time Management

Time management emerged as another pivotal attribute for school principals, with its role and implementation varying distinctly between the two countries. Pakistani principals focused on meticulous planning and strict adherence to schedules. One principal noted, "Time is a resource we cannot afford to waste; precise planning and execution are imperative for our school's success." Another added, "I segment my day hour-by-hour to ensure that I am available for academic planning, administrative tasks, and any emergencies that may arise." On the other hand, in Indonesia, the approach to time management appeared more fluid and adaptable. One principal expressed, "While it's crucial to plan, we must also leave space for the unplanned, the human elements that cannot be scheduled." Another Indonesian principal shared, "Flexibility is key. I set general guidelines for what needs to be accomplished but allow room for adaptability depending on the situation."

Pakistani principals demonstrated a preference for a more regimented, structured approach to time management, often mentioning "schedules," "precision," and "timelines." This may reflect a cultural context that values predictability and order. Conversely, Indonesian principals emphasized "flexibility," "adaptability," and "room for spontaneity," revealing a more open-ended approach. This could be indicative of a more adaptive culture that values relationships and understands that unplanned interactions often lead to meaningful outcomes. This divergence can offer valuable insights into how time management strategies may need to be culturally tailored. While the 'one-

size-fits-all' approach may seem appealing for ease of implementation, the findings suggest that appreciating cultural nuances can lead to a more effective leadership style in different educational settings.

4.3. Influence
The attribute of influence, essential for effective leadership, took varying forms among Pakistani and Indonesian principals. In Pakistan, influence was often seen as an extension of authority and hierarchy. One principal stated, "Influence in our setting comes from setting a high standard and maintaining a position of respect. Teachers and students respond to a figure of authority." Another principal remarked, "Our societal structure respects hierarchy. By adhering to these norms, I can effectively guide and control the academic and administrative proceedings of the school." In contrast, influence among Indonesian principals was more relational and consensus-driven. "Influence isn't just about directing people; it's about understanding them, collaborating with them," one principal mentioned. Another said, "My influence comes from my relationship with my staff and students. We discuss, we vote, and we find a collective path forward."
Pakistani principals leaned toward a top-down approach, emphasizing authority, discipline, and strict guidelines to exert influence. The terms "authority," "control," and "respect" were often cited, potentially indicative of a cultural emphasis on hierarchical order. In contrast, Indonesian principals favored a more democratic approach to influence. Words like "collaboration," "collective," and "relationship" were frequent, suggesting a leadership style attuned to community building and shared decision-making. This variance between the two countries points to distinct cultural paradigms shaping their notions of influence. While Pakistani principals may find success in leveraging their role as a figure of authority, Indonesian principals might thrive through their ability to foster collective decision-making and a sense of community. The differences in influence style can offer critical insights for educational leaders, especially in Muslim-majority nations, aiming for a nuanced, culturally-sensitive leadership training program.

4.4. Comfort
The concept of comfort as a leadership attribute demonstrated diverse interpretations in the Pakistani and Indonesian educational contexts. In Pakistan, the attribute of comfort seemed to align closely with providing a structured environment. As one principal noted, "Comfort for my staff and students comes from knowing what to expect. They feel comfortable when they know the rules and the consequences." Another principal said, "In our culture, authority and structure bring a sense of security and thus comfort." Indonesian principals, on the other hand, associated comfort with emotional support and open dialogue. "Comfort is the result of a good relationship and emotional connection with my team. It comes from the freedom to express oneself," one principal said. Another principal elaborated, "I aim to create an environment where teachers and students can speak their minds. This way, they feel comfortable and part of a nurturing community."
Pakistani principals focused on stability and predictability as the pillars of comfort. Their approach aligns with a traditional mindset where comfort is derived from established norms and discipline.

In contrast, Indonesian principals leaned towards an emotionally supportive environment, fostering comfort through personal connections and open conversations. Their definition of comfort seems to prioritize the collective emotional well-being of the staff and students, stressing the value of psychological safety in an educational environment. The divergent views on comfort between Pakistani and Indonesian principals reflect different cultural and educational priorities. Pakistani principals prioritize structural integrity as a source of comfort, while their Indonesian counterparts emphasize emotional and relational facets. This information may be crucial for educational policymakers and trainers to tailor leadership programs that respect these nuanced, cultural interpretations of comfort in a leadership context.

4.5. Decision-Making

The attribute of decision-making elicited some of the most distinct cultural variations between the principals from the two countries. In Pakistan, the principals were more aligned with autocratic and centralized decision-making processes. One principal stated, "In our system, it's vital for the principal to be the central decision-making authority. It ensures swift actions and less confusion among staff." Another commented, "My role is to make tough decisions; it's what I am trained for. I listen to my teachers, but ultimately, the decision is mine." Conversely, Indonesian principals revealed a more collaborative approach. "Decision-making is a collective process for us," one principal noted. "We often involve teachers and even senior students in important decisions. This makes everyone feel invested." Another Indonesian principal explained, "Collaborative decision-making is not just about getting multiple perspectives; it's about building a community. This is essential for us."

The Pakistani principals prioritize efficient and straightforward decision-making mechanisms, aiming for clarity and quick implementation. Their approach appears to be highly influenced by a top-down model, where the leader assumes ultimate responsibility for decisions. On the other hand, Indonesian principals seem to draw from a democratic and inclusive model, incorporating diverse opinions before making any significant decisions. Their approach appears to promote community involvement and shared responsibility. The contrasting approaches to decision-making between Pakistani and Indonesian principals could be rooted in historical governance models, educational philosophies, and cultural norms. In Pakistan, the emphasis on a more centralized decision-making process may stem from a traditional respect for authority. In contrast, Indonesia's communal culture may encourage the collective decision-making observed in their educational leadership. This differentiation in decision-making styles can be invaluable for the development of leadership training programs, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective across different cultures.

4.6. Commitment

The aspect of commitment revealed fascinating similarities and differences in the leadership styles of principals in Pakistan and Indonesia. In Pakistan, the concept of commitment was strongly linked to duty and responsibility. One principal remarked, "Commitment for me is synonymous

with duty. My responsibilities toward my school and my students are my utmost priority." Another stated, "I'm committed to making sure that our academic standards are the highest possible; anything less is unacceptable." Indonesian principals framed their commitment in terms of their investment in the well-being of their community and educational environment. One principal said, "Commitment to me means being deeply involved in not just academics but also the emotional and social well-being of my students." Another echoed, "For me, commitment is an all-encompassing concept; it includes everyone from the teaching staff to parents and students. I'm committed to nurturing a community."

Pakistani principals demonstrated a more performance-oriented view of commitment. They emphasized academic excellence and administrative duties as the primary areas requiring their unwavering commitment. Their approach aligns well with a traditional, result-oriented model, where the primary focus is on deliverables and measurable outcomes. Indonesian principals presented a more holistic view of commitment, encompassing academic responsibilities, but also extending to emotional and community well-being. Their model aligns with a more human-centered approach to leadership, emphasizing the well-being of all stakeholders. Both sets of principals showed a high degree of commitment, but the scope and application of this commitment differed markedly. The Pakistani principals' focus on academic outcomes and administrative efficiency could stem from the high-stakes environment of educational metrics and assessments. In contrast, Indonesian principals may be influenced by a cultural inclination toward communal welfare and holistic well-being. These findings offer valuable insights for cross-cultural leadership training, underlining the need for tailoring approaches based on regional nuances and cultural expectations.

4.7. Communication

The data on communication attributes highlighted interesting contrasts between Pakistani and Indonesian principals, shedding light on cultural nuances that influence their leadership styles. Pakistani principals emphasized formal, structured communication channels. One principal noted, "Communication is essential, but it should follow the chain of command. Everyone should know their place and responsibilities." Another added, "Effective communication for me is concise and direct; it eliminates any room for misunderstandings." On the other hand, Indonesian principals emphasized open, two-way communication. One principal said, "Open dialogue fosters a sense of belonging and community. It's not just about giving orders but also listening and understanding." Another Indonesian principal added, "For me, communication involves emotional intelligence. It's not just what is said but how it's said. Non-verbal cues are crucial."

Pakistani principals appear to lean towards a hierarchical and structured model of communication, highlighting the importance of clarity, conciseness, and formality. This can be attributed to a traditional administrative culture that values order and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. In contrast, Indonesian principals display a more democratic and inclusive approach to communication. They value emotional intelligence and openness, encouraging dialogue among all stakeholders, including students, teachers, and parents. This may be reflective

of a more communal culture that values the input and participation of its members. The findings suggest that while Pakistani principals aim for efficiency and clarity through structured communication, Indonesian principals aim for inclusivity and emotional connectivity through open dialogues. These divergent approaches offer critical insights for leadership development programs, indicating that communication training should be culturally nuanced to be effective. This also implies that leadership communication is not a one-size-fits-all skill but must be adapted to fit the unique cultural and organizational contexts in which it is employed.

4.8. Empathy
The study reveals notable distinctions in the approaches to empathy by principals in Pakistan and Indonesia, which further underlines the influence of cultural norms on leadership attributes. Empathy in the context of Pakistani principals seemed largely driven by a sense of duty and responsibility. One principal remarked, "Being empathetic is part of my role as a leader, but I have to ensure it doesn't conflict with the rules and policies of the school." Another principal shared, "I show empathy by understanding the challenges teachers and students face, but ultimately, my role is to make decisions that benefit the institution as a whole." Indonesian principals, on the other hand, viewed empathy as a foundational pillar of their leadership style. One principal elaborated, "Empathy is the root of all good leadership. It's how we understand the needs, motivations, and hardships of our teachers and students." Another stated, "I see empathy as the first step towards problem-solving. You can't address an issue without understanding it at an emotional level first." The data shows that while Pakistani principals practice empathy within the boundaries of institutional rules and policies, their Indonesian counterparts view it as intrinsic to effective leadership and problem-solving. In the Pakistani context, empathy is often constrained by an overarching commitment to institutional objectives, where the emotional component is secondary to the decision-making process. On the other hand, Indonesian principals seem to place empathy at the forefront of their decision-making process, emphasizing a more human-centric approach. This implies a culturally ingrained preference for a leadership style that seeks first to understand and then to act, as opposed to a more hierarchical and rules-focused approach observed among the Pakistani principals.

These contrasting views on empathy can serve as invaluable inputs for leadership training programs in both countries. For example, Pakistani principals could benefit from training modules that teach them how to incorporate empathy into their decision-making in a balanced way, while Indonesian principals could learn how to pair their naturally empathetic approach with effective institutional governance. The results underscore the notion that the concept of empathy in leadership is deeply contextual and influenced by the cultural and societal norms of a particular region. Therefore, any interventions or training programs aimed at improving this attribute should be culturally sensitive and adaptable to local conditions.

5. Discussion

As elucidated by Lerutla and Steyn, (2022), cultural values serve as the crucible from which leadership styles are forged. Their research posits that in societies characterized by hierarchical structures, such as those prevalent in various parts of the world, educational leaders tend to gravitate towards more authoritative leadership approaches. Conversely, within more egalitarian societies, leadership inclinations lean towards the participatory end of the spectrum. The alignment with cultural values and leadership styles mirrors the findings of this study. The study casts a discerning spotlight on the leadership practices of principals in Pakistan and Indonesia, two nations entrenched in distinct cultural landscapes. The intricate tapestry of Pakistan's societal fabric, which is woven with hierarchical threads, culminates in a preference for structured and authoritative leadership among its educational leaders, which aligns seamlessly with the cultural backdrop where order and discipline hold paramount significance. In stark contrast, Indonesia's cultural milieu, indicative of a more communal and collectivistic ethos, engenders a propensity towards transformational and empathetic leadership. The societal value accorded to community and the bonds that unite individuals in Indonesia serve as the driving force behind educational leadership styles. Consequently, Indonesian principals, as illuminated by the findings of this study, are more inclined to embrace leadership characterized by transformational qualities and a keen sense of empathy.

These findings of the study can be better understood when related to existing theories, such as Sharma's (2010) focus on humanistic attributes and Cheng's (1994) five types of educational leadership. Sharma's (2010) framework places importance on humanistic attributes like empathy, open communication, and emotional intelligence in leadership roles. When looked at through this lens, it is clear that Indonesian principals align more closely with Sharma's (2010) model. Their focus on empathy and open communication indicates a more humanistic approach to leadership, which may derive from the nation's cultural emphasis on collectivism and community. Pakistani principals, in contrast, may find areas for improvement when their methods are evaluated against Sharma's (2010) humanistic framework. The predominantly autocratic style and hierarchical emphasis suggest less focus on these humanistic attributes, which are essential for developing a nurturing educational environment.

On top of that, Cheng (1994) categorized educational leadership into five types: managerial, instructional, participative, transformational, and moral. Pakistani principals largely fall under the managerial and instructional categories. Their focus on attributes like self-management and commitment reflect a more structured, rule-based approach to leadership. Indonesian principals, on the other hand, manifest characteristics related to transformational' and participative leadership. Their emphasis on empathy, communication, and influence indicates a leadership style that seeks to inspire and include, which fits well into Cheng's (1994) categories. Both theories provide a comprehensive framework to evaluate the comparative findings. While Pakistani principals focus more on managerial competencies, they could benefit from incorporating more humanistic and participative attributes into their leadership styles. Conversely, Indonesian principals, who already embody the humanistic attributes highlighted by Sharma (2010) and participative leadership styles

posited by Cheng (1994), continue to set a benchmark for what effective educational leadership can look like in a culturally diverse setting. Besides, Fisher's (2021) comprehensive exploration into leadership styles within educational settings adeptly uncovers a significant correlation between these styles and the broader societal norms and governance models within which they operate. In Pakistan, the discernible preference for transactional and authoritative leadership styles is a reflection of the overarching societal emphasis on order, discipline, and hierarchies.

The inclination towards transactional and authoritative leadership in the study is further illuminated by Deniz & Demirkasimoğlu (2022), who delve into the intricacies of Pakistan's cultural fabric in their study. Their research unearths the deep-seated cultural underpinnings that underscore the preference for such leadership attributes, underlining the societal need for structured and disciplined educational environments. Conversely, the Indonesian context provides fertile ground for the emergence of transformational leadership, as astutely noted by Effendi (2020), who sheds light on the cultural values deeply ingrained in Indonesian society, emphasizing community bonds and collectivism as pivotal societal tenets. This cultural backdrop fosters an inclination towards leadership styles characterized by transformational qualities, where educational leaders are often driven by a sense of community and the greater good. The imperative need to infuse humanistic qualities into the leadership styles of Pakistani principals is also firmly buttressed by recent research conducted by Gómez-Leal et al. (2022). Their work cogently argues that in the contemporary educational landscape, the attributes of empathy and emotional intelligence emerge as linchpins in effective leadership. This paradigm shift towards humanistic leadership attributes aligns seamlessly with the evolving dynamics of educational leadership.

The findings of the study are further reinforced by the research conducted by Ovando (2023), who underscores the growing recognition of the pivotal role played by emotional intelligence and empathy in effective leadership, particularly within the intricate tapestry of multicultural educational settings. The contemporary educational landscape increasingly demands leaders who can navigate the complexities of diverse cultural contexts with sensitivity, where emotional intelligence and empathy become invaluable tools for fostering inclusivity and understanding.

In addition, the recommendation to introduce more structured task domains into Indonesian leadership practices finds solid support in recent scholarly inquiries, exemplified by studies such as the one conducted by Subiyanto & Djastuti (2018). According to the authors, while transformational leadership is acknowledged as an effective approach, the call for a harmonious balance between transformational ideals and structured, task-oriented methodologies reverberates in organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Purwanto (2021) underscores the effectiveness of a multifaceted leadership approach that integrates transformational qualities with transactional elements within the educational context. The symbiotic relationship between these leadership attributes is instrumental in yielding superior outcomes, enhancing both teaching and learning experiences.

Furthermore, the clarion call for culturally nuanced leadership development initiatives resonates harmoniously with the broader discourse prevalent in the realm of literature on leadership. This is evidenced in the works of Tan (2022), whose study passionately advocates for the implementation

of context-specific leadership training programs. The author emphasizes the paramount importance of a profound understanding of the intricate cultural and societal nuances that intricately mold leadership practices. Tan's (2022) assertion not only underscores the findings of our study but also highlights the compelling need to tailor leadership development programs to address the unique contextual intricacies of educational leadership across diverse cultural landscapes. By embracing cultural nuances and societal subtleties, leadership development can become a potent catalyst for fostering effective educational leadership.

Meanwhile, the far-reaching implications of the study for cross-cultural leadership training are substantiated by the cogent insights offered by Deal and Prince (2003), who emphatically underline the imperative need for leadership training programs to be adaptable and culturally sensitive. Their work highlights the notion that leadership development should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach but rather tailor training initiatives to resonate with the unique cultural contexts of leaders. Folarin (2021) echoes this sentiment by advocating for a personalized approach to leadership development. The author puts stress on the paramount importance of crafting leadership development strategies that meticulously take into account the intricate interplay of cultural and institutional factors. By doing so, leadership training programs can be more efficacious in nurturing the skills and competencies necessary for effective leadership in diverse cultural settings.

Moreover, in consonance with the current trajectory of leadership research, it is imperative that future studies direct their focus toward unraveling the intricate interplay between global leadership competencies and the nuanced tapestry of local cultural norms. As proposed by Kezar (2023), the burgeoning need exists to delve deeper into the dynamics at the intersection of global educational trends and local leadership practices. The study avenue of this study promises to shed light on how leaders in educational settings can effectively bridge the gap between global competencies and local contextual realities, ultimately fostering more effective leadership practices. Overall, the alignment between leadership approaches and cultural backgrounds underscores the importance of considering cultural nuances when developing leadership development programs. Pakistani principals could benefit from infusing more humanistic and participative attributes into their leadership styles, while Indonesian principals serve as exemplars of transformational leadership influenced by communal values. These insights resonate with the broader discourse on cross-cultural leadership training, emphasizing the need for adaptable and culturally sensitive programs.

6. Conclusion

The study provided valuable insights into the leadership attributes and styles of school principals in Pakistan and Indonesia, underscoring the profound influence of cultural contexts on their leadership practices. It elucidated how attributes such as self-management, time management, influence, comfort, decision-making, commitment, communication, and empathy manifest differently in these two countries, resulting in distinct leadership styles. Pakistani principals tend to adopt a transactional and authoritative approach, prioritizing commitment and self-management as they navigate an environment marked by hierarchical structures and rule enforcement.

Conversely, Indonesian principals exhibit a transformational leadership style, emphasizing empathy and open communication, reflecting their cultural inclination towards collectivism and community-building. Importantly, these findings align with established leadership theories, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive leadership development programs. The implications are clear: Pakistani principals can enhance their leadership by integrating more humanistic qualities and embracing participative management, while Indonesian principals could benefit from introducing greater structure in areas like time management and decision-making. By acknowledging these cultural nuances and tailoring leadership practices accordingly, educational institutions in both countries can strive for more effective and contextually relevant leadership, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and the growth of their respective school communities.

7. Recommendations

1. Pakistani principals can benefit significantly by incorporating more humanistic qualities, such as empathy and open communication, into their leadership styles.
2. The hierarchical approach often seen in Pakistani leadership could be balanced by introducing participative management strategies, thereby enhancing staff morale and creating a more inclusive school environment.
3. Pakistani principals should aim to be more culturally sensitive, understanding the growing need for diverse teaching methods and school practices tailored to different communities.
4. While Indonesian principals excel in humanistic attributes, a more structured approach to tasks like time management and decision-making could be beneficial.
5. Incorporating data analytics in decision-making could bring in more objectivity and measurability in leadership outcomes among Indonesian principals.
6. A greater focus on setting measurable targets for staff and students will enhance accountability, thereby complementing the already strong empathetic and humanistic leadership style among Indonesian principals.
7. Training modules should be created specifically targeting skills where each country's principals need development, such as humanistic skills for Pakistani principals and organizational skills for Indonesian principals.
8. Stakeholders should leverage theories like those of Sharma (2010) and Cheng (1994) to provide a conceptual background, helping principals understand why certain attributes are essential.

8. Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights, it has limitations. The qualitative approach may limit generalizability, purposive sampling might not capture full diversity, and the focus on Muslim-majority countries could restrict broader applicability. Moreover, the research instrument may not

cover all relevant attributes, and reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias. The cross-cultural analysis may also oversimplify the interplay between cultural influences and leadership attributes. Recognizing these limitations is crucial for a nuanced interpretation and highlights areas for future research.

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