

# Role Ability among the Middle Class Principals (Khargone (M.P.) India)

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Received: December 7, 2012 Accepted: January 30, 2013 Published: March 27, 2013

doi:10.5296/ije.v5i1.3444 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ije.v5i1.3444>

## Abstract

Role ability is an influential self-regulatory mechanism for enhancing the effectiveness of a person in a particular role. Present study aimed to investigate the level of various aspects of role ability among the principals of secondary schools with reference to their sex and school locale. The study was conducted on 100 school principals of Khargone district (M.P.) It was found that although, in general, the level of role ability among the principals is high; there are few aspects which need to be improved upon. Few measures to be adopted by principals and the administrators have also been suggested.

**Keywords:** role ability among the middle class principals; ability among the middle class principals

## 1. Introduction

Principal is the kingpin of any institution. He/she is the person who is responsible for the attainment of the goals of that institution, may it be in the form of effective planning or the successful implementation or the development of a healthy organizational climate. He / she is the change agent who transforms the teaching and learning culture of the institution. It is very necessary that these key functionaries, who play the role of leaders and change agents, must rely on their own strengths to cope with problems mostly by themselves and sometimes by taking help of other people, and must show positive and approach behavior.

Effective performance of any person working in an organization deepens on his own potential effectiveness as a person, his/her technical competence, his/her previous experience, etc. Here, one more factor becomes important due to its motivating nature – his/her own perceptions regarding his/her compatibility with the designing of the role performed by her. In psychological terms, his factor is called role ability which is an influence self-regulatory mechanism for enhancing the effectiveness.

Role Ability: The concept

Role Ability is to be considered as potential effectiveness of an individual occupying a particular role in an organization. If he feels that his role allows him to use his competence and he is well-integrated with his role, he is likely to be effective in his role. The integration between the two may be on various dimensions and in different ways. According to Pareek (1987), there are following three main dimensions of role ability each one consisting of several aspects –

‘Role Making’ (contrasted with role taking) which is an active attitude towards the role. It involves active participation by the role occupant to define her role – the priorities in her functions, the ways in which she would achieve them, and the ways of becoming effective in her role. Four aspects are included in this dimension :

- (a) Self-role Integration – enjoying the role and thinking that it is according to liking, training and aptitude.
- (b) Proactively-taking initiative in his/her role.
- (c) Creativity – innovating, or trying and doing new things.
- (d) Confrontation - confronting and solving conflicts or problems.

‘Role centering’ (contrasted with role entering) which is concerned with increasing the power of the role. A role occupant can feel that his/her role is very important and can take steps to make it important by increasing his/her influence. One way to increase is to gain more knowledge and skills. This process is called centering (making the role central). This dimension includes three aspects:

- (a) Centrality – perceiving importance.
- (b) Influence – exercising influence for making her advice as accepted.

(c) Personal growth – perceiving the role as providing opportunities for personal growth.

‘Role Linking’ (Contrasted with role shrinking) which extends the relationships of the role with other roles and groups. A role can have extensions which link it with other roles in terms of interaction, as well as in helping relationship. This dimension includes three aspects :

(a) Inter Role Linkage – working or interacting with other roles, working in groups consisting of others.

(b) Helping relationship – Providing or taking help from other role occupants.

(c) Super ordination – contributing to some ‘large’ entity.

In a nut shell, it can be said that role ability of a person is concerned with the satisfaction of the person in her role and welfare of the others.

Some of the researchers in foreign countries have shown their interest in evaluating the work and success of principal in the concerning role played by them. The ability of principals in their role is directly or indirectly measured in many studies. Findings of some studies are as follows.

In a qualitative study cascadden (1988) explored eight elementary principals conceptions about their roles and found that principals perceive their roles to be conflicting in which decision making was distributed.

Dembowski (1998) also argued that many educational administrators are confused over their role in the organization and are unclear as to what management-related tasks and functions they should be conducting.

Portin et al. (1998) opined that time constraints and external priorities are converting principals from instructional leaders to managers, while increasing their role’s ambiguities and negatively affecting enthusiasm, and morale.

Kochan et al. (1999) inferred in their study that external pressures, particularly those related to state mandates, the budgeting system, and accountability measures, have increased stress, paperwork, and workload. Male and female principals perceived their roles in similar ways. However, women viewed the tasks before them and the ways in which they must deal with them in a more global manner than did males.

The review of related researches presented above shows Indian researchers have paid very little attention to study various psychological and managerial aspects of the school principals. Present study is a modest attempt in this direction. It aims to investigate the level of role ability among the principals of secondary level educational institutions, so that, in future, some interventions can be designed to improve it by the joint efforts of the principals themselves, senior management and top administrators.

## **2. Objectives**

The study aims to fulfill following objectives :

- 1) To assess the level of role ability among the principals of secondary level institutions.
- 2) To investigate if there is sex difference in the role ability of rural and urban school principals.
- 3) To compare the role ability of rural and urban school principals.

## **3. Hypotheses**

- 1) Principals of secondary level institutions show average level of role beliefs.
- 2) There is no significant difference in role ability of male and female principals.
- 3) No significant difference exists in role ability of principals of educational institutions located in rural and urban areas.

## **4. Methodology**

Keeping in view the objectives of the study the descriptive survey method was chosen by the investigator for this study.

## **5. Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample consisted of 100 principals of secondary level educational institutions of Khargone district (MP). The sample was selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique keeping in view proper representation to both the sexes and both types of school locale.

## **6. Tool**

In order to assess the level of role ability beliefs among the principals, Role Ability Scale constructed and standardized by pareek was used. The scale measures role ability of a person occupying a particular role in three dimensions – Role Making, Role Centering and Role Linking Consisting of ten aspects. The scores on all the ten aspects of role ability are totaled. Individual scores dimension wise, aspect wise and overall are converted into role ability indices (RAI) with the help of the table. A high index indicates that the respondent perceives that he has a great deal of opportunity in his role to be effective.

## 7. Data Analysis and Interpretations

For the analysis of the data in the present study, mean, SD and ‘t’ test have been used.

Entries in table-1 show the role ability indices on three dimensions of role ability for principals. RAI for role making, role centering and role linking dimension are 84.21, 80.89 and 82.11 respectively. As the values are fairly high, showing more than 80% effectiveness of principals in their organization. It can be inferred that principals perceive that they have a great deal of opportunity in their role to be effective. However, highest index on the dimension ‘role making’ indicates that the best part in their role ability is their active participation in defining their own priorities ways of achieving them and the ways of becoming more effective in their role of a principal.

Further, it is evident from the t values mentioned in table-1 that in overall role ability, principals don’t differ significantly either compared sex wise or locality wise. Dimension wise analysis of the data again shows insignificant ‘t’ values except for comparison between rural and urban principals’ role centering mean scores. In this case, ‘t’ value (2.11) is significant at .05 level and principals of urban locality schools have scored higher mean scores than their counterparts of rural locality. This infers that principals of schools located in urban area perceive their role to be more powerful, influence and important as compared to the rural school principals.

**Table 1:** Values of Role Ability Indices and Significance of mean differences (Male us. Female; Rural us. Urban) for three Dimensions of Role Ability

S.No.	Name of the Dim.	Mean	RAI	t-values	
				M us. f	R us. U
1.	Role making	12.21	84.21	0.94	0.02
2.	Role centering	8.56	80.89	1.26	2.11
3.	Role linking	8.78	82.11	1.11	1.61
	Overall	29.55	82.58	1.55	1.64

\*significant at .05 level

The perusal of data presented in table-2 makes it apparent that the role ability indices of principals on four aspects of role making dimension are fairly high. The indices for integration, proactively, creativity and confrontation aspects are 86.83, 65.00, 91.67 and 93.33 respectively. Above 90% values of RAI for creativity and confrontation aspects show that secondary school principals are excellent in role ability on these bases. But, on the proactively aspect they are not so good which infers that principals do not perceive themselves very good in taking initiations to start a new process and set a new pattern of behavior.

Further, all the t values mentioned in table-2 are insignificant which infers that on various aspects of role making dimension of role ability, neither the principals differ sex wise, nor they are different locality wise.

Table-3 shows the role ability indices of principals on three aspects of role centering

dimension. RAI for centrality, influence and growth aspects are 82.67, 80.67 and 79.33 respectively. The data shows that the feeling among the principals that their role is very important and they themselves can take steps to make it more important by increasing their influence, is good enough.

It is also apparent that the means scored by male and female principals are not significantly different as all the 't' values regarding male-female comparisons are insignificant. This infers that there is no impact of principal's

**Table 2:** Values of Role Ability Indices and Significance of mean differences (Male us. Female; Rural us. Urban) for four Aspects of Role Making Dimension

S.No.	Name of the Aspect	Mean	RAI	t-values	
				M us. f	R us. U
1.	Integration	3.21	86.83	1.56	0.04
2.	Proactively	1.90	65.00	1.87	0.62
3.	Creativity	3.50	91.67	0.22	0.34
4.	Confrontation	3.60	93.33	1.34	0.45

**Table 3:** Values of Role Ability Indices and Significance of mean differences (Male us. Female; Rural us. Urban) for three Aspects of Role Centering Dimension

S.No.	Name of the Aspect	Mean	RAI	t-values	
				M us. f	R us. U
1.	Centrality	2.96	82.67	0.82	3.12
2.	Influence	2.84	80.67	1.04	1.68
3.	Growth	2.76	79.33	0.63	1.32

\*significant at .01 level

Sex on these aspects of role ability. However, locality wise analysis of the data shows that on centrality aspect, obtained 't' value ( $t=3.12$ ) is significant at .01 level and the principals of urban locality schools scored higher mean values than their rural school counterparts. Thus, urban school principals perceive their role to be more central and important probably because of better exposure, opportunities and scope in urban locality than in the rural area.

Role ability indices of principals for three aspects of role linkage dimension are presented above in table-4. RAI for inter role linkage is found to be highest and super ordination aspect is found to be lowest. The data makes it apparent that the principals are very efficient in developing task related as well as emotional linkage with other people of the organization either at the higher level or at the lower level. Comparatively lower value of RAI on super ordination aspect indicates that their perceptions regarding the usefulness of their role to a much large entity, for a higher cause, to serve others are not very good.

On analyzing the sex-wise difference in the mean scores, t-ratio (3.73) computed for helping relationship aspect of principals is found to be significant at .01 level of significance. The mean score of female principals is significantly higher than the mean score of their male counterpart. Thus, sex of the principals plays some role in determining their role ability on

the helping relationship aspect. The reason behind this finding perhaps lies in the basic nature of men and women. Empathy, support, sacrifices, etc. Which are the contributing emotions for the development of helping relationship are said to be more prevalent among the women.

Furthermore, analysis of data to study the locality wise differences in the mean scores, 't' value (2.28) for inter role linkage aspect is found to be significant at .05 level of significance. The mean score of urban school principals is higher than that of their rural counterparts. This infers that although, in general, the principals are potentially very effective in perceiving that there is very good scope in their role for working or interacting with other persons or groups,

**Table 4:** Values of Role Ability Indices and Significance of mean differences (Male us. Female; Rural us. Urban) for three Aspects of Role Linkage Dimension

S.No.	Name of the Aspect	Mean	RAI	t-values	
				M us. f	R us. U
1.	Inter – role linkage	3.71	95.17	1.30	2.28
2.	Helping relationship	3.31	88.50	3.73	1.38
3.	Super ordination	1.76	62.67	1.40	0.32

\*significant at .05 level

\*\*significant at .01 level

Urban principals are superior to rural ones this regard probably because of better opportunities and more demands in urban society.

## 8. Conclusions and Suggestions

The role ability of principals plays very significant role in the goal achievement of any educational institution. So, it must be taken care of strategically, take decisions about what to do and in what way, and decisions would be implemented with follow up phase. Present study is an attempt of first and second step in this strategy. The study concludes that –

- 1) The level of role ability among the principals is high. The best part of their ability is role making, i.e. their active attitude towards the role.
- 2) Best three aspects of principals role ability are – inter role linkage, confrontation and creativity comparatively weaker aspects are-proactivity and super ordination.
- 3) Female principals are potentially more effective. than the male principals in developing helping relationships with other members of the system. On rest of the aspects. Male and female principals are similar in their role ability.
- 4) As compared to rural school principals, urban school principals are better in role ability on centrality and inter role linkage aspects. Otherwise, Principals of both the locality are same.

Although, as per the findings of the present investigation, it is very heartening to note that our

principals possess role ability in fairly good amount, there is still some scope for betterment. The study indicates towards few aspects which are the comparatively weaker points in the role ability of the principals. Proactivity and super ordination are two such aspects, for the strengthening of which few suggestions are hereby provided. Proactivity gives initiativeness of the person and required freeing oneself from and taking action beyond the immediate concerns. Proper counseling of the principals can be done in this respect. They must be suggested to analyze their own role and identify the elements in which there is some scope for initiation. They must be encouraged to take initiative in giving their ideas and thoughts in meetings at several levels for various purposes. Organization can help the principals in this respect by motivating the initiativeness either through providing special awards or by including it in performance appraisal forms or any other type of reward.

Super ordination is indicative of the relevance of a person in a particular role to a much larger entity. Principals are suggested to look for and avail the opportunities to serve a larger group. e.g. society, nation, world. School administration must help the principals in understanding the institutional missions. Proper incentives should be provided to the principals to take up those tasks which are related with the welfare of the larger sections. Team work should also be encouraged, assessed and rewarded appropriately.

Findings of the present study regarding the differences in role ability of male and female principals, and urban and rural principals suggest about the scope and limits of the efforts to be made in this area. This also recommends and appeals for some more researches in this area so that some more concrete suggestions can be provided for enhancing and properly shaping the potential effectiveness of these key functionaries.

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